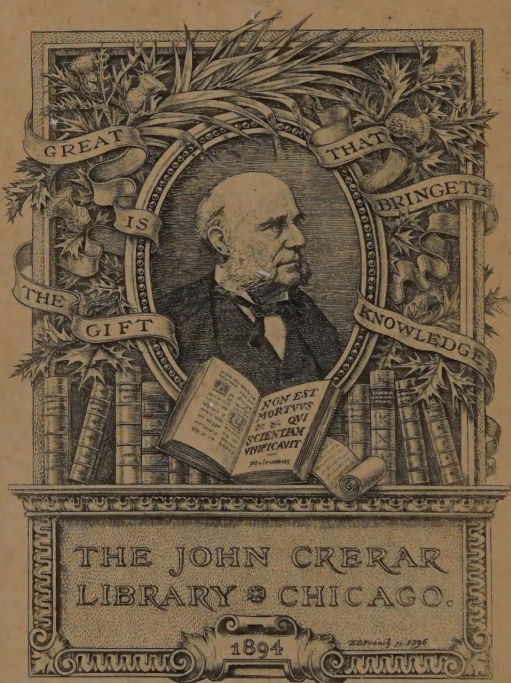


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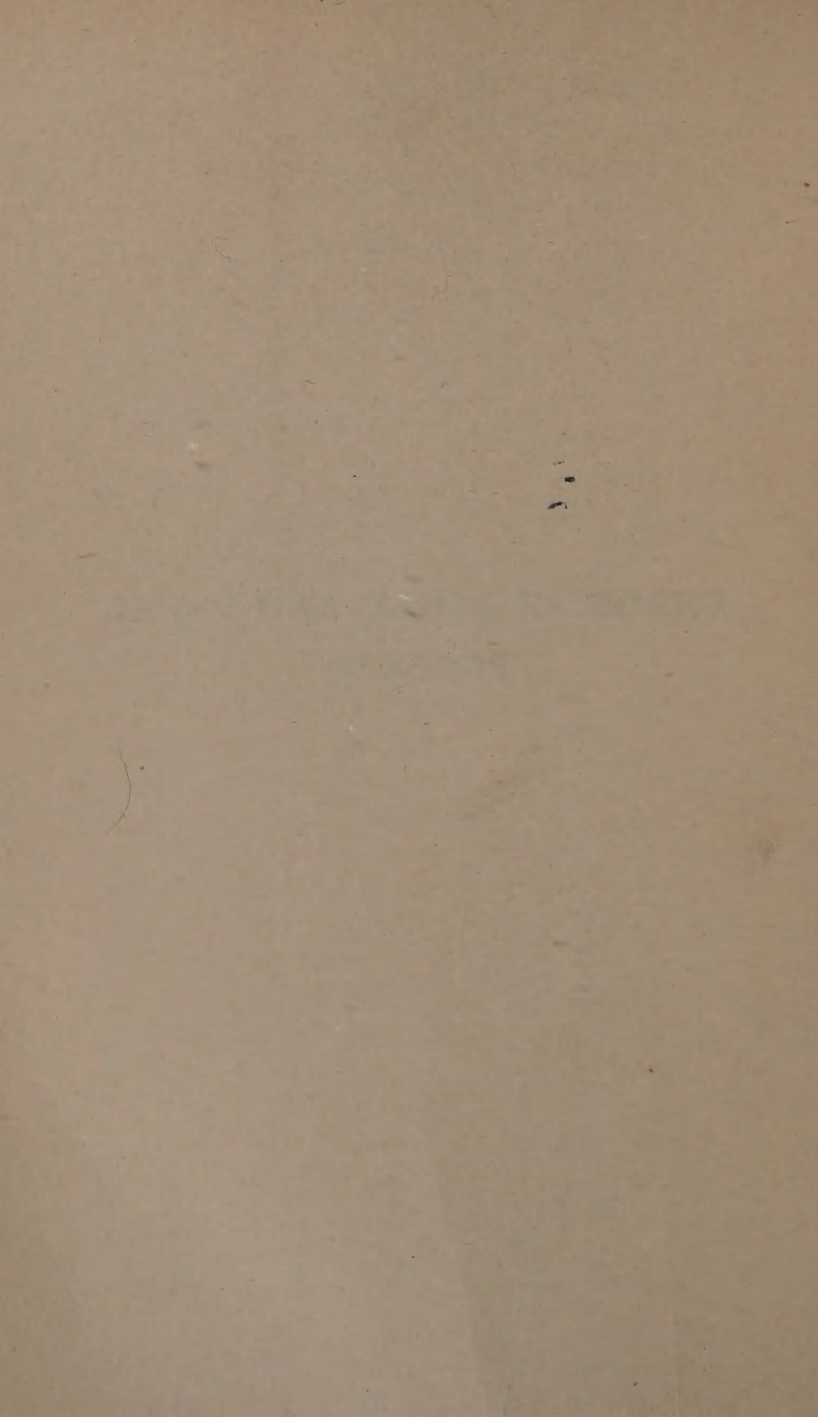


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CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SOCIAL
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CHRISTIAN ETHICS

AND

SOCIAL PROGRESS

BY

J. WILSON HARPER, D.D.

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P R E F A C E

IN the following pages I have examined Christian Ethics in the light of ethical research and its teachings.

It is only possible, I submit, fully to appreciate the content, the value, and the far-reaching implications of Christian Ethics when the steps and stages in the universal quest for moral values are carefully traced.

I have accordingly attempted to traverse rapidly the wide field of ethical history, and to describe the position occupied by representative men, such as, among others, in ancient times, Heraclitus, Plato, Zeno ; and in modern times, Hegel, Nietzsche, Bergson.

The review will, I trust, justify the reasoned claim which I have offered in favour of the supreme value of Christian Ethics.

I have adduced evidence to prove that Christian Ethics is directly related to the Person of Christ, to His higher spiritual teachings, and to the great spiritual and moral transformation of the lives of men which He came to effect.

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Our Lord gave to moral life new motives and the loftiest ideals. He also created a new ethical atmosphere, and refined ethical imperatives by means of a gracious spirit ; but all these are the direct outcome of His own Personality, and His higher spiritual teachings. He, because of what He is, spoke with authority ; and His, " I say unto you," is final in the sphere of morals as in that of faith.

I am aware that writers on Christian Ethics have assumed these truths. They have, indeed, taken them for granted ; but so far as I have observed they have not directly based Christ's moral upon His spiritual teachings, and yet this is the one thing which is most obvious.

I should frankly state that it has been my chief endeavour to apply Christian Ethics to social life, and to prove that social progress is dependent upon the high ethics of the Christian Faith. This is the burden of the book ; and throughout its pages evidences of this endeavour will be found.

A long study of sociological questions has produced in my mind the deep conviction that their solution is impossible apart from the application of the high ethics of the Christian Faith.

The more carefully I read philosophy and watch the Social Movement the more I am convinced that, as the philosopher in his search

for Truth and Reality needs the Light of Revelation, so the sociologist must take into his service the great moral imperatives of the Christian Faith.

There is accordingly, in my judgment, no more urgent duty imposed upon the Church than that of affirming and enforcing the ethics of her Faith.

But the intelligent discharge of this duty necessitates a searching examination into the present conditions under which commerce is carried on. It also shows how needful it is to bring Christian Ethics into touch with economic problems, which demand a solution, and cannot brook delay.

When this duty is sympathetically undertaken, the direct bearing of Christian Ethics upon social life immediately becomes apparent, and evokes absorbing interest.

But since commerce is world-wide in its operations, and economic principles are universal; and, further, since mankind is a brotherhood, Christian Ethics must be brought to bear upon international life in all its aspects. I have shown that the moral law, applicable to individuals and to the family life, can also regulate international life.

Socialism overshadows all other subjects. It calls loudly for attention. I have tried to describe the socialistic spirit, and to distinguish

between it and its hitherto imperfect manifestations. This spirit has the right to rule and reign. It carries also with it a healing and elevating influence; but just because it is at once tender and strong, beautiful and mighty, those who profess to obey its dictates must take wide and long views of life, and must also be careful as to the agencies which they select in order to give it expression.

I have dealt in some detail with the socialistic spirit and its operations. It is that which interprets, and likewise illumines, life. But it is not to be confounded with any political party. It may give inspiration and direction to politics. Still Socialism, rightly understood, cannot be made identical with any political party.

The alternative to Socialism is Individualism. Both terms express *a spirit, a principle*; and when either principle enters into the economic or political province it soon reveals its true character; but it is a misuse of these terms to apply them exclusively to political parties; for, all parties obey now the one, and now the other, principle, though some are more obedient to the one than to the other.

If, therefore, any political party professes to be socialistic, the spirit to which it owes allegiance cannot be mistaken, nor can the duties, which this spirit imposes, be misunderstood.

Class war, hatred, and a passion for material

things to the neglect of spiritual development are directly opposed to the socialistic spirit. But though these are sometimes falsely offered as the expression of Socialism, they are foreign to its spirit. Not by such agencies can social wrongs be righted, or a strong and healthy state of society be realised, but by a passion for righteousness, love, and goodwill.

I know that it may appear to some as altogether Utopian to affirm this truth ; but whoever rejects it also sets aside the most distinctive teachings of Christian Ethics, and also denies to Socialism its rightful place and influence.

I am under a debt of gratitude to my friends, the Rev. A. W. Scudamore Forbes, B.D., Mr. M. Blair, and Mr. W. Miller, for kindly reading the proofs ; and I gladly acknowledge the service which they rendered while the work was passing through the press.

J. WILSON HARPER.

ALLOA, *October* 1912.

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CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

CHAPTER I

THE NEW SITUATION

I

CHRISTIAN Ethics is to-day on its trial. All who read and observe are aware that a persistent and fierce attack is made upon the moral teachings of the Christian Faith.

They avail, Nietzsche allows, for weak but not at all for strong men.¹ They suit individuals, says Mr. Frederic Harrison again and again, but they do not govern society.² They do not apply to international affairs.³

¹ This is the burden of Nietzsche's complaint.

² This is affirmed by Mr. Frederic Harrison in his New Year Addresses to the Positivist Society.

³ This is the contention of Lord Lytton. See his Rectorial Address to the Students of Glasgow University, 9th November 1888.

The assault is thus directed not at one point only, but at every place where it seems to the assailants the walls of the citadel may be scaled. The fact of the assault is not, however, the only thing which deserves attention. In addition, it must be noted that the most powerful weapons which ingenuity can devise are skillfully and persistently employed.

How the assault is conducted is not without interest, though one cannot resist an interjection of surprise now and again as one watches the operations of the assailants. One also, and not without good reason, often enters a *caveat* when their conclusions are examined.

This is how they proceed. Christian dogma, they contend, has gone by the board. The historical basis of Christianity, they further allege, has been undermined; and now, they say, a fine ear can hear the creaking and straining of the falling timbers of the Christian edifice.

Matthew Arnold in rejecting dogma, in their opinion, pulled down only a few pictures from the wall. David Strauss, Theodor Keim, and Ernest Renan, in exposing the lack of historical foundations for Christian beliefs, removed only a few stones from the basis of the Christian building. But now, they confidently affirm, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, and

Maurice Maeterlinck have demolished the entire Christian structure; for, now the morality of the Christian Faith has gone, and with it all that was worth preserving.

This picture of desolation is complete. It is painted in dark colours. There is not even a streak of light in it to cheer and encourage deluded Christians. All is dismal and forbidding. One might say at once that, were justification found for this picture of desolation, one should bid farewell to long-cherished hopes.

But what of the message of righteousness, which men, inspired by the Christian Faith, have often in the past thundered in the ears of morally decadent nations? What of the awakening of these nations to a new spiritual and moral life, as at the Reformation? and what of the liberating influence of the Reformation which was felt throughout the whole of Europe?

What, again, of the innumerable martyrs, who not only suffered heroically, but also gave to mankind splendid illustrations of the Christian ideals of nobility? What of the long roll of philanthropists, who have relieved distress by the erection of Hospitals, and befriended orphans by the establishment of Homes for neglected children? What of the social legislation of the day, with its Education and

Children's Acts of Parliament, and whence comes the spirit of this legislation?

What of the innumerable kindly deeds performed by Christian men and women on behalf of the poor and friendless, while those who merely outline social schemes are doing little or nothing to help the needy?

And, what, further, of the peacemakers who have united warring sects in the bonds of peace, and are to-day insisting upon the application of Christian ethics to industrial and national disputes, thus making for social and international harmony?

Are all these to count for nothing? Are they not witnesses to the moral power of the Christian Faith? And, may they not be legitimately taken as valid evidence of all that men and women, inspired by their faith in the love and goodness of God, have accomplished under the influence of Christian ethics?

II

Waiving, however, for the moment this accumulated and convincing evidence, one must take account of the new situation which has been created by the attacks that have been made upon Christian ethics.

In view of the assault which is made one cannot resist the conviction that a re-examina-

tion of ethics itself has become an urgent necessity. Inquirers are no longer satisfied either with the points of view from which the ethical province was formerly examined; or, with the old landmarks which once were regarded as safe guides through that province.

Many searching investigations have, therefore, within recent years been conducted into the origin and evolution of moral values. Investigators have contended that all moral questions must be closely examined in the light of the vast stores of information, which recent metaphysical and psychological, biological and anthropological research has accumulated. Many of these investigators confidently affirm that when these questions are so examined new moral values emerge.

But this is not all; for, it is further argued that, with the fresh light thrown upon moral issues, it is no longer sufficient to raise questions as to the standard of moral judgments and their possible unity; and that it is no longer enough to discuss ethics under the divisions; *self-control, courage, wisdom, and justice* made by the Greeks, and adopted by the Fathers of the Christian Church, who added *faith, hope, and love*; or, under Schleiermacher's divisions: *virtue, duty, and the Chief Good*, followed by

Rothe, and also by many moralists until within recent times.

It is, therefore, maintained that questions respecting the *Chief Good*, a common standard of moral judgments, and the possibility of reducing these judgments to a unity, must be preceded by an investigation into the validity of the reasons for holding by Truth and Reality. Categories of moral qualities are discarded. The ultimate nature of Truth and Reality is the chief object of search.

This, it is held, brings ethics into close touch with life and its trials, disciplines, and crises. From these emerge moral values, and also the evidence which justifies their acceptance.

One may allow that this latest pronouncement has much in its favour. One may, however, be unable to see how it wipes the slate clean, and renders all previous philosophic investigations aimless and useless, because, as it implies, they have all been conducted from false premises and in a wrong manner.

But still there is much to be said for this pronouncement. The intellectualistic tendency of idealism has perhaps been over-emphasised. Reality is more than the outcome of "a system of relations." Relations are steps and stages by means of which one attains to Reality. But Reality also belongs to the content of experi-

ence. It lies within experience as something known. The mind, the knowing subject, with its principles of unity is that which really explains all knowledge and experience : but experience itself counts, and also accounts for much.

A Realistic Reaction issuing in a new form of Natural Realism is not, therefore, the only alternative. Idealism can be corrected, and indeed be verified by experience.

When this is done, one is on the plane where human interests lie. One can then also see how ethics must concern itself with all questions which touch life. To-day more than at any previous time men, profoundly interested in the betterment of society, are all for experience and its teachings.

Ethics is brought to this touchstone, and an answer is eagerly sought for such questions as : How do ethical principles tell upon character and conduct ? Which of these tends to produce the nobler type of men ?

But Christian moralists are specially challenged, and such questions are raised as : Are the moral imperatives of the Christian Faith sufficient for the individual, and can they guarantee a social life, healthy and beneficial to all its members ? Can they give all that is ethically required for the solution of social problems, and for the consolidation of an

enduring state of society? Do they, therefore, make for social progress?

All these questions have within recent years been keenly debated. Philosophers endeavouring to answer them have been thrown back upon first principles as well as upon experience.

Some, like Schopenhauer and M. Bergson,¹ seek, and profess to find, an answer to many of them in a new metaphysics. Some, like Wundt and Fouillée, are all for a more thorough psychological analysis. In their view this is essential, and they therefore respectively hold that metaphysics and psychology alone explain moral values.

Others, like Spencer and Dr. Westermarck, declare strongly for an interpretation of the moral life in terms of biology and anthropology. They maintain that thus only can moral values be accounted for and explained.

Others, like Dr. James and Dr. Schiller, while not neglecting either metaphysics or

¹ It is sometimes said that M. Bergson has no metaphysics; but his *élan de vie*, "the inrush of life" or "vital impulse" is his distinctive metaphysical postulate in terms of which he explains all developments. His *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience* is a treatise on the nature of the mind, apart from which time, space, and material objects have no reality. It is true that he makes more of mental action than of the mind itself, which is "orientated towards action rather than pure knowledge"; but his postulate of "life force" lies beneath all his theorisings.

psychology, bring all moral questions to the test of experience; and with all pragmatists ask, are they "workable," and have they a "meaning"?

Mr. Bertrand Russell and Mr. George E. Moore, the latest exponents of philosophic problems, are both advocates of a new logic as essential to a better metaphysics, and therefore to a more intelligent interpretation of moral values.

Christian moralists also enter the arena wherein these questions are discussed. Responding to the challenge which has been addressed to them, they confidently affirm, after a re-examination of the foundations of their Faith and its moral implications, that Christ has brought a new ethical force into human life; that "the love of Christ" is the constraining motive to brotherly, disinterested service; and that Christian ethics is sufficient both for the individual, and for society.

III

It is not my intention to attempt a discussion of all the questions which lie within the province of moral philosophy. I shall not trouble the reader with many of them; but here I cannot help saying that the social reformer, burdened with the weight of the social evils of the day,

the philosopher of the school, and "the man in the street," all feel more or less keenly the subtle and often disconcerting influence of the results of conflicting judgments respecting mental and moral questions. If to some the air is clear, to others the heavens are darker; and many have their faith in a moral order of the universe shattered.

As I deal chiefly with Christian ethics in its relation to social progress my main business will be to examine its content, and to try to ascertain the value of the arguments urged against it.

This will necessitate an examination of Christian ethics as it plays upon and moulds society. For, as will be seen in a moment, it is in social life that ethics is tested.

To this test Christian ethics, like that of all other schools, must be brought; and its worth will be apparent according as one is able to adduce evidence in support of the claim that Christian ethics makes for the elevation and consolidation of society.

Christian men need not fear, but rather welcome, the task which is imposed upon them. It is, however, manifestly their duty to acquaint themselves with the new situation. They must indeed closely examine it, and that too in the light of history and experience. This may

entail labour ; but the toil will be amply repaid by the possession of a firmer faith in what is ethically the highest and the best.

The new situation largely consists in this, that new moral values are assumed to have displaced the old. This is the contention which is persistently urged, and it is this contention which must be sifted.

Christian men are thus to-day in the interests of their Faith under an obligation to respond to the challenge which is addressed to them. They must attempt an answer to the ethical questions which are raised, and produce reasons for receiving or rejecting new moral values.

This makes the situation, recently created, all the more attractive, and invites an impartial investigation.

IV

A word of warning is, however, here necessary. One must do the fullest justice to the exponents of what is claimed to be new moral values. The genesis of their opposition to Christian ethics must also, if possible, be ascertained ; and the cause or causes of their revolt must likewise be set out plainly.

When one attempts to do them the justice which is their due, it will perhaps be seen, even by those who have been most hurt by the attacks directed against Christian ethics, that

there is some excuse for the attitude which assailants have assumed.

For the indifference of many Christians to the high ethics of their Faith, and their unwillingness to give effect to all that Christian ethics imposes, may be, I do not say, an ample justification, but, at least, an excuse for the action of those who discard Christian ethics.

It does not, however, follow that their positive contribution to ethics must be accepted; and much less must it be taken as proven, that they have invalidated Christian moral values.

Proof of these things must be supplied; and it is when one examines evidences, that one sees on what side the weight of proof lies. All that I contend for is, that justice must be done to those who cannot, or will not, accept the ethics of the Christian Faith.

With this warning in view, now look at the situation which at the present time demands attention.

A contest as to moral values is being waged. It is keen. One might almost say that it is very fierce. Determination and sincerity belong alike to assailants and defenders.

The field of battle is that of our common social life. No province affords better opportunities for testing the claims which are made in the name of ethics. It is, indeed, in social

relationships, and in the duties which these carry with them, that the value of ethics can alone be verified.

v

But here it is necessary to consider at the outset how ethics enters into the controversies of the day; how also it has high functions assigned to it; and how men strive vigorously for their own moral values.

Ethics is all-essential. It stands midway between metaphysics and psychology on the one side; and economics, politics, and social actions on the other.

Every moralist, worthy of the name, must have a metaphysic, and a psychology of human life. He may not designate his mental investigations by these high-sounding terms; but he must attempt a reasoned view of mental and moral life.

It is the fashion among moral philosophers, who are also all for psychological analysis, to say that according as an inquirer emphasises one or other of the "notes" of personality so will be his ethics. *Feeling, Reason, or Will*, the manifestations of the Ego, which lies hidden and beneath phenomena, may be taken; but whichever is adopted, it is held to determine to a very large extent the ethics which is accepted and advocated.

This, speaking generally, holds true. I venture, however, to affirm that it would be more satisfactory, and would lead to better results, if a synthesis of the manifestations of the Ego was carefully made. Man cannot be divided into separate parts, and that part which is selected be isolated from the others. He must be treated in the unity of his personality ; and ethics which does justice to that unity can alone provide a basis for moral values.

But whatever explanation of mental states may be offered, ethics does not stand alone. It is active and not passive. It has its *terminus ad quem*. It is not a mere abstraction, but a vital force in life.

Accordingly it passes at once into the regions of economics, politics, and social actions. It makes its powerful influence felt within all these provinces. It gives character to all that belongs to them. What one's ethics is, will determine the character and pursuits of one's life, in the broadest sense of the term.

Thus, ethics enters into the controversies of the day. It stamps itself upon all economic movements and gives them direction.

Its influence upon economics may be questioned, or even denied ; but economics, rightly understood, is no longer capable of being, as I shall try at a later stage more fully to explain,

wholly expressed by mere mathematical formulæ. It concerns itself with how wealth is created, and also *how it is spent*. It deals with man and the conditions of labour; and ethics cannot therefore be excluded or neglected where man's welfare is at stake. This is now recognised by almost all modern economists. But this subject requires fuller treatment, and I shall attempt such a treatment at a later stage.¹

Ethics, too, reflects itself in politics. For every political measure which deals with welfare and well-being is only justifiable according as it is morally defensible. Whatever Act of Parliament violates moral law evokes loud protests, and runs the risk of leading to rebellion.

The wise legislator, therefore, always tries to find moral as well as economic authority for his measures; and he wins the proud title of "a great statesman" who, in addition to the exercise of other qualities, carries moral conviction into all his public actions.

VI

It need scarcely be said, for now it must be quite manifest, that all social life is profoundly affected by morals. A strong and healthy social state is preponderatingly dependent upon

¹ See p. 178 *et seq.*

moral factors. Hence to-day, whatever may be their attitude towards religion, all earnest social reformers lay emphasis upon morals. Ethical culture is everywhere commended, though it must be added, that many Christian men, the inheritors of the purest ethics, fail, as I shall show, to apply it to business and social life.

For these reasons, then, the highest functions are ascribed to ethics. It holds a governing position.

It would take me too far afield to state, even briefly, all that could be said respecting the supreme place which ethics holds in social life. I content myself with saying that it occupies such a place, because no other factor can be an adequate substitute for it, and because it tells directly upon the character of individuals, and the strength of a State.

Any one can now see the position which ethics occupies. Any one can also perceive the reasons why moralists of different schools keenly contend for their own moral values. This is indeed one of the questions of the day; and this likewise explains why a new situation has been created.

Since, then, ethics holds a position, attractive to the philosopher engaged in the study of mental states, and to the man who has a passion

for social progress, it merits the most careful attention.

This attention is deepened when different moral values are the subjects of earnest and thorough discussion. It becomes absorbing when the contention is urged that Christian ethics must, in the interests both of the individual and of society, be discarded, and other ethics take its place.

The question thus raised is for Christian men simply *vital*. No other word can more fittingly express the issues which are at stake.

This gives to the subject, a treatment of which I shall attempt, supreme interest. It touches and concerns every one who lives and thinks. It is intensely human and practical.

CHAPTER II

THE CLAIM OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

I

CHRISTIAN ethics is based upon Christ's higher spiritual teachings. The moral structure is, in its every part, dependent upon them. Christian ethics reflects them. Its motives, its inspiration, and its ideals take their nature, colour, and form from them.

What, briefly stated, are these teachings?

1. Christ revealed the Father, His nature and purpose. He taught that He is Love, and that He is ever seeking man's spiritual and moral restoration.

2. He spoke in plain terms about the Person of the Holy Spirit who "proceedeth from the Father," and also concerning His mission, which is to convince men of their sin, to lead them into all truth; and with this end in view to interpret the words of Christ.

3. He claimed that He Himself is one in nature with the Father, saying, "I and My Father are One." He claimed, therefore, to be Divine.

4. He explained His own mission as one of service, and pre-eminently of redemption. He came, He said, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

There is a distinctly marked ascending scale in Christ's teachings as they bear upon man.

1. He insisted upon regeneration as a condition of men and women entering into His Kingdom.

2. He showed how close and sacred is the union between Himself and all who are His disciples.

3. He brought life and immortality to light, and revealed the path of duty and the way of life.

4. He gave to His followers a new and world-wide mission. He bade them preach the glad tidings of His Kingdom to all men.

Thus, He threw the light of His great luminous words upon inquiries respecting God, man, and the world. His whole design was to change the character of men through the operations of the Holy Spirit, and to induce them to live to the glory of God, as their chief end in life.

II

Moralists do not generally give a specific place to these truths; but Christian teachers must give them prominence; for, Christian ethics

has only a meaning according as a right interpretation is given of the great spiritual and moral revolution which Christ came to effect, and did accomplish.

Christian ethics cannot be explained apart from Him and His teachings. It is *Christian*, and is so designated to distinguish it from other ethics.

But Christ did not come in order to set aside what is good and true in the teachings of moralists. He came not "to destroy, but to fulfil." He enlarged their moral values. He added to them.

He also supplied new motives to obedience. He gave to morality a new atmosphere, and refined its imperatives by the new spirit with which He inspires all who endeavour to obey them.

Taking the moral teachings of Christ as He Himself enunciated and explained them, the distinctive claim is made, that Christian ethics is able to transform and beautify the individual, and also social life.

But this claim is disputed, controverted, and denied. It is confidently contended that the claim made on behalf of Christian ethics is altogether invalid; that neither a larger view of life, nor wholesome discipline, comes from Christianity; that its ethics fails to supply powerful social factors, and to produce higher types of

men; and that it appeals only to the weak, and not to the great and the strong. These, in brief, are the contentions of Nietzsche and his followers.

The claim of Christian ethics, and the denial of this claim, stand out therefore quite distinctly. Both are easily apprehended. This is a great advantage.

The claim and its denial are openly and boldly made. But it is idle, on the one side or the other, to give utterance to confident assertions. Proof must be supplied for all that is affirmed.

The natural order is followed when, in the treatment of this claim and its negation, one begins with the claim itself. The grounds upon which objections to it are made can then be better examined.

Investigation must be made by the aid of the fullest available light. The claim must also be calmly examined.

This is not an easy task. Bias is an element of which account must always be taken. It is, indeed, extremely difficult to state in an orderly and simple manner the evidence on behalf of the claim of Christian ethics. It tasks to the utmost one's knowledge, insight, and sense of fairness so to set out proof of the value of Christian ethics that one may legitimately hope

to be able to carry conviction to the minds of those who reject the ethical teachings of the Christian Faith.

But this is the very task which at the present time needs to be attempted.

III

Now, when the claim of Christian ethics is closely examined, it is at once seen that the ethics of the Faith offers a wide view of human life. It sets up the highest ideals of character and conduct. It supplies the purest and strongest motives to disinterested service and brotherly actions. It speaks imperatively, but also graciously. It appeals to the strong and to the weak. It addresses society as well as the individual, and shows to both the path of duty and the way of life.

When the evidence for this large view of human life is investigated prominence should be given to *the distinctive character* which belongs to Christian ethics.

It is *spirit*, and not legal enactment. And, because it is *spirit*, its appeals are made to men of all times and of every degree of attainments. *Hence its wide outlook on life.*

The strongest and weakest alike find their element in it; for there is no man, however ethically strong he may be, who does not dis-

cover, if he has open eyes and an open mind, high ideals in Christian ethics to which he has not yet attained, and also the motive and element which make the pursuit of these ideals possible. *Hence its lofty aims and its powerful factors.*

The Christian Faith begins with the individual. It insists upon personal regeneration. Its ethics requires personal devotion and purity, personal service and goodness. But its great ruling conception is that of "the Kingdom of God," within which the good of each member is only secured by seeking the good of all members. It is pre-eminently social, and therefore deals with society as well as with the individual.

IV

Christ's teachings, let it be remembered, constitute Christian ethics. While uttering His great living words, He ever appealed to the moral intuitions of men, and showed that obedience to His words issues in a new spiritual life, and also in a new social order.

What Christ taught the crowds that flocked to His ministry, what He required from them, and what He offered to them, should, therefore, be clearly before the mind of any one who aims at understanding Christian ethics.

Our Lord's work from beginning to end was redemptive. Redemption was His theme, and

the establishment of a kingdom, from every member of which He looked for a loyal, because a loving, service, was His object. In appealing to the moral intuitions of men He knew that His words would find a response, though it did not always follow that all men would yield personal submission to Him. Many did, but not all.

He claimed to be able to satisfy their deepest spiritual wants. But He ever insisted that they should feel their need of Him. He summoned them to repentance and faith. He required that they should acknowledge their guilt, and need of forgiveness. To all who were sincerely penitent He spoke the word of pardon, and gave the priceless gift of eternal life.

In this manner Christ changed, and indeed revolutionised the hearts and minds of all who became His disciples. He made all things new for them. Repentance, change of mind, "birth from above," laid the basis of a new character. But He went further; for His beautiful moral teachings were all uttered with the object of building up a new society, and a new social order the members of which are required to be "zealous of good works."

Christ is Saviour. He saves from sin, but He saves in order to establish and extend a kingdom distinguished by "the notes" of righteousness, love, and truth.

He neither sanctioned the ascetic life of the hermit, nor countenanced the morbid life of the ostentatiously religious. He was all for lowliness of spirit, gentleness, and a cheerful trust in the goodness of God.

He has not, therefore, left His followers to grope in the dark, or to be uncertain as to the type of life which they should strive to imitate. He has made clear as the noonday the standard of conduct to which they should endeavour to conform. What He Himself did, the spirit which animated Him, the objects which He had in view, form the type and standard for all who bear His name.

This type of character is not only new, but it is also the final type.

v

In stating these elementary truths of the Christian Faith I am only giving expression to the commonplaces of Christianity and its ethics. But it is doubtful whether, in the discussion of Christian ethics, sufficient prominence is given to these root-truths. Many earnest men are all for an outward reformation, drastic political reforms, and new social conditions. They are not equally insistent upon a change of heart, and a consequent new character. Many of them give no place at

all to Christ's great imperative, "Ye must be born from above." But He taught most plainly that this is an absolute necessity to a new life and a new social order.

Given, however, a change of mind, the assurance of life eternal, as a Divine gift, follows; and the possession of eternal life inspires all who receive it to constant abiding in Christ, and obedience to His teachings.

Where and when these initial truths are accepted there and then only is the Kingdom of God realised, and social advance from the purest motives and with highest aims in view is made possible.

Upon these truths Christ and His Apostles ever insisted. They gave them the first place: for these truths belong to what is most essential in the Christian view of life.

Neither Christianity itself, nor its ethical teachings, can be rightly understood apart from these truths. The claim of Christian ethics rests upon them. These are, indeed, its foundation. They also throw the clearest light upon and explain Christian ethics.

But assent being given to them, it is at once legitimately taken for granted that it is the duty of Christians to conform to the high standard which Christ by His example and teachings has set up. The effort to be true

to Christ and His imperatives carries with it a larger conception of human life, and goes to make for a higher type of character.

It is worth one's while to pause for a moment, and reflect upon the direct bearing of Christ's great spiritual teachings on life, and upon the reception accorded to His teachings.

Christian experience is deeply rooted in these teachings. If they be overlooked one has not the key in one's hand to the unlocking of the door which leads into the inner sanctuary of high Christian experience, where "imitation of Christ" is the all-absorbing theme. And it need scarcely be said that a very great part of what is most distinctive of the Christian life is left out of account when this experience is unrecognised and unexplained.

Obedience to Christ, it must be repeated again and again, is that which is most distinctive of genuine Christian experience. Sometimes, it must be admitted, the demands of Christ have been misunderstood. Witness the mystics, and still more notably those who in order to escape from the world have shut themselves in cloisters. The austerities of their life speak volumes of praise in favour of their zeal, though not of their insight into Christ's teachings.

But Christian experience has far oftener been

of a different character and a higher type. Men have pondered long and deeply upon the Divine love which meets and answers their deepest needs. They have gone from their retirement into a busy world, and have given beautiful illustrations of the power of Christ's moral teachings over them. Their humility, self-sacrifice, their kindly disposition, and generous actions are the commentaries upon and confirmation of their Faith.

I refer to this experience because it is the outcome of the operations of the Christian spirit, and because it throws light upon Christian ethics, as well as upon the claim made in its name.

But here a frank confession must be made. Justice has not been done to the ethics of the Christian Faith by large numbers who profess acceptance of it.

Nothing else is more insistently demanded by Christ than obedience to the great imperatives of Christian ethics, to *love, righteousness, self-sacrifice, humility, and brotherliness*. This obedience issues in a larger view of life, deepened sympathies, high ideals of character, and powerful motives of conduct. These are the outcome of, and also the distinctive witness to, Christian ethics.

But they have not been anything like wholly

realised. Vast numbers of professedly Christian men have not been obedient to the moral imperatives of their Faith. They have not applied them, as I have already said, to business transactions. "Business is business," they say, and forthwith conclude that they are not called upon to obey any higher standard than that of the market-place. The economic question is the problem of the day; but so far as they are concerned no serious attempt is made to solve it by the application of Christian ethics.

This is the last thing of which many of them appear to think. It often, indeed, happens that the louder and more openly a man makes a profession of religion, he is, when engaged in business transactions, the more ruthless, unscrupulous, and overreaching. He is harsh. It never seems to be his special care to treat his workmen in a brotherly manner, and to give them remuneration equal to their toil. He reserves for the religious meeting, where he is a prominent person, soft tones and a sleek countenance. The strong ethics of the Christian Faith never touches him.

I have referred to the mystics, and those who adopt the cloister life. The sincere among them do not make a profession of religion for the sake of thereby winning a good name; and religion with them is never a means of material

gains. Often they are capable of heroic acts of self-denial in submitting to self-imposed penalties. But even these have not been noted for their social service. Social betterment, indeed, owes little to them ; and it must, therefore, be acknowledged that with all their deep spiritual experience they have not done much to realise the kingdom of God on earth.

It must also be confessed that the Christian Church, as such, has not done justice to her social mission. The Church has often dealt with the Gospel of the kingdom of God merely as means of safety, or, at the utmost, as it tells upon the individual life. She has not emphasised it as an inspiration of a high social life.

This defective interpretation of the Faith allows no place for the operation of its ethics in business transactions and social relationships. It inexcusably overlooks the prayer which teaches Christian men and women thus to pray : "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

It is true that Christ said : " My kingdom is not of this world " ; but these words do not mean that His kingdom is not to be realised in this world. It is in the world, but it is not " of the world " ; it is not of its spirit, character, and aims.

Christ claims the right to reign and rule in

this world. He inspires His disciples with new motives. He demands self-denial not only in times of persecution and trial, but also in relation to the common affairs of life, its business and its pursuits.

Social relationships are the sphere within which He means His teachings to tell directly and powerfully; and they are eminently fitted as well as designed to revolutionise the entire economic life. Until this be done, His teachings are not wholly regnant, nor can His kingdom come, and His will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Notwithstanding His explicit teachings and requirements, many Christian men go on their way, and without either remonstrance or guidance from the Church they cultivate a passion for wealth, and make the possession of money the passport to positions of influence and honour.

In presence of this condition of things the poor utter their plaintive appeals, and workmen their loud and indignant protests.

One can understand the distress and the resentment who sees the vast accumulation of wealth in the hands of relatively few, and the pinching poverty of tens of thousands. One cannot but be filled with infinite regret who also observes the ominous silence of the Church while these things obtain.

But justice, such as they deserve, must be done even to those who have a passion for wealth. One meets them in company. They are like their fellows, quite human. In their private relationships they are often very courteous and kind. Many of them are also anxious to know and do their duty. There is, therefore, no justification for the cynic's sneers at them; and "the genus, wicked plutocrat" has no meaning.

The truth is, they are the creatures of a false economic system which the Church scarcely attempts to alter. She is in the first instance to blame, and that because she does not fulfil her social mission by applying her ethics to the economic and the entire social life.

All these things must be frankly admitted; but the admission does not imply that the claim of Christian ethics is invalid. Only a superficial observer will hastily, and only a person with a strong bias against Christianity will confidently set aside the claim.

1. A judgment in favour of Christian ethics must be given if an appeal be made to history, and a long view of historical development be taken.

2. This judgment will be confirmed if, further, the content and merits of Christian ethics be carefully and impartially weighed.

3. The judgment will be made final if specially the method and conditions of the Divine redemptive Purpose in human life be read in the light of Revelation and experience.

1. A long view of history affords ample evidence of many individuals, inspired by the Christian Faith and its ethics, living lives of splendid self-denial, and rendering social service of the highest order. The men, indeed, who have sent society along the path of progress have mostly been Christian men—great missionaries, philanthropists, statesmen, and Churchmen.

This is the indisputable testimony of history. The records of the deeds of these men are written plainly on its pages.

Again, no one who has knowledge and moral insight questions the fact, also attested by history, that Christianity has poured fresh moral streams through the channels of society, and has largely made the civilised countries of the world what they are to-day.

These countries, it is true, are not perfect, but the elements of stability which belong to them are in great measure due to Christian education.

In presence, therefore, of these historically well-attested facts the ethics of the Christian Faith cannot be pronounced invalid.

2. The content and merits of Christian ethics speak for themselves. It has on all sides been

recognised that the moral teachings of Christ are the highest ever uttered.

I shall in a future page examine this subject in detail, and try to show the enlarged view of life which Christianity gives, and also what is of the essence of Christian ethics.

But meantime it is enough to say that, when the moral teachings of the Faith are investigated as to what they contain and teach, they cannot be dismissed off-hand as invalid.

Those who profess them may not do justice to them. Their lives may be poor commentaries on their Faith; but surely it is possible to distinguish between Christian ethics in itself, and the conduct of many who profess to hold by it. When this is done the beauty and strength of the ethics of the Faith at once appear.

3. But perhaps the strongest and most convincing evidence of the validity of the claim made on behalf of Christian ethics comes with a close observation of the method of the operations of the Divine redemptive Purpose in human life.

Christ never promised the immediate realisation of His kingdom on earth. He took full account of the conditions under which men and women live, and also of the conditions to which His own Purpose of redemption required to adapt itself.

I have already shown that He dealt with sin,

the darkest of all problems, and that He came to take it away. It must be added that, while the acceptance of Christ, as personal Saviour, ensures *at once* eternal life, the life Divine is only fully realised after a long and constant struggle with many a temptation. "Sin as a problem of to-day" is ever asserting itself. The Divine Purpose makes the fullest recognition of its presence and power. It also takes full account of man's weakness, and consents to carry on its operations under the conditions created by sin and man's liability to sin.

There is no possible interpretation of Revelation or of the Christian life if these truths be not accepted. Both become meaningless if they be overlooked or denied.

In any explanation of Christian ethics they must indeed be recognised, and that, too, fully and frankly. For, Christianity treats evil as ever present, hampering and hindering moral progress. Nothing else takes such notice of sin, the gravest of all problems, as the Christian Faith takes of it. The Divine Purpose, which it reveals, is ever represented as engaged in a ceaseless battle with sin; and the presence of evil therefore explains, though it does not excuse, the moral lapses and failures of even those who profess to hold by the high ethics of the Faith.

But the Christian Faith cannot submit to

defeats. It must ultimately tell upon social life. It makes man realise his personal defects and limitations ; but if it humbles him it does this in order to lift him up again, and to give to him a new outlook, and to inspire him with pure, strong motives, and a deathless hope.

The Divine Purpose in human life goes forward to its goal, therefore, under well-defined conditions. Man's freedom, on the one hand, and his responsibility on the other, are duly recognised. Ultimate victory is assured ; but evil will not be rooted out in a day. A long slow process and a wholesome discipline are both necessary. A final triumph will, however, be enjoyed, and that because there are included in the Divine Purpose a great and gracious saving Message for men, and the highest ethical values.

Thus, if adequate account be taken of the distinctive character of Christian ethics, as *spirit* ; of Christ's method in dealing with men and of what He demands from them ; of what belongs essentially to Christian experience ; of the testimony of history ; of the content and merits of Christian ethics ; and of the conditions under which the Divine Purpose in human life consents to operate, the claim made on behalf of Christian ethics cannot be easily set aside or be pronounced invalid.

CHAPTER III

ETHICAL VALUES—A UNIVERSAL QUEST

I

IF the *dictum* of Hegel be endorsed that "you cannot understand things apart from their history" it is at once imperative that an effort should be made to grasp the significance of the long and laboured search which men have made after moral values.

But while an endeavour should be made to understand this universal quest, what it entailed and what are its results, the distinctive claim of Christian ethics, as just described, must also, at the same time, be kept well in view.

I have given prominence to the historic truth that the revelations which Christ made respecting God, man, and the world lie at the root of Christian ethics, and give it character, direction, and aim. I have also shown that it is in social life, according to the teachings of the Christian Faith, that morals are tested and their value made apparent.

But they are tested in a manner which is distinctive of Christian ethics alone. For it assumes the unity of the interests of men, and that the good of all men is the good of each. It emphasises the solidarity of the human race. Its imperatives are addressed to mankind without reference to time or clime.

To all Christ shows the way of life, and teaches plainly that obedience to His word issues in a realised brotherhood, in the knowledge of the truth, and in freedom.

Thus the revelations which Christ made, and the moral teachings based upon them, give substance and volume to Christian ethics, while at the same time they also define and explain its claim.

II

Now, when one tries to understand and interpret the search for moral values, Christian ethics receives an illuminating illustration from the investigations which philosophers have felt themselves urged to make. For they have raised and endeavoured to answer the questions : Is God knowable? If He can be known, what is His character? and what is His Purpose in relation to man? How, next, can truth and reality be verified, and man realise his life?

But in attempting to return an answer to these questions they have travelled along that

road which the Christian Faith shows—for belief in God is a demand of the Faith—must be taken by all who engage in a quest for moral values of a high type and character. They have accordingly been obliged to postulate the existence of God; for, not otherwise can either man and his moral obligations be understood, or the evil which is in the world be overcome.

If the history of this quest be consulted, abundant evidence lies to hand to prove that it has been a long and weary way along which philosophers have travelled. Many of them have often mistaken the right path. Others, coming after them, have seen wherein they have strayed, and, warned by their fruitless search, have returned to the one way, which leads to truth, reality, and freedom.

Stated in other terms, this means that philosophers in their quest for moral values have been obliged to seek first for a metaphysic of life.

But the demand for a metaphysic, rightly understood, is really an acknowledgment that moral values must ultimately rest upon, and derive their authority either from metaphysical postulates, or from the will and character of a supreme Being.

A brief excursion into the field of philosophic

history will show what evidence exists and confirms this statement. I limit myself to the investigations of comparatively modern inquirers.

It was, as is well known, the supreme endeavour of Kant to discover moral truth as that which makes for the enrichment of human life. But he had to attempt a metaphysic of life. His contention that phenomena, and not "the thing in itself," could alone be known, limited, however, his eager investigations, and led inevitably to a series of negations respecting the very objects of his pursuit.

All who are acquainted with philosophic research accord to Kant great praise for his untiring labours. He has made all subsequent inquirers his debtors.

But it must also be said that his self-imposed limitations blocked and barred his path. He did not wholly explore the wide field where moral truth and reality are verified, and that because he was unable to convince himself of the validity of the evidence for belief in anything beyond phenomena.

Hegel, again, engaged in a long and strenuous search for moral truth. He vigorously protested against the assumptions of rationalism. He recognised the need for a metaphysic of life. He also perceived the great assistance

which is given to any one in search for truth and reality, who is able to reach the conclusion that God is, and rules and reigns.

But unfortunately he was a slave to a passionless dialectic. He, therefore, limited his progress, and indeed strayed into arid by-lanes, where logic is a hard unbending master, but where free play cannot be given to insight and imagination.

Hegel, it must ever be thankfully remembered, enlarged man's view of life, and also emphasised social obligations by his idealism. But his severe logic clogged his steps, and prevented him from entering into the realm where God and man can be rightly understood.

The unity in all things, deeper than all their differences, as that which reconciles all apparent contradictions, was a fine conception on the part of Hegel, and might have led him far.

But his dialectic hampered him at every stage of his inquiry. He hesitated to go forward to the one conclusion to which unity in all things points, a firmly rooted conviction as to God's existence, and His moral universe.

The philosophy of Hegel flowers in the writings of Strauss and Feuerbach. Their negations supply evidence of the great thinker allowing himself to stray into by-lanes. Still,

he made a noble endeavour to discover truth and reality, and therefore that which gives inspiration and direction to human life.

It was the unsatisfactory results of the labours of Kant and Hegel which induced subsequent inquirers to adopt new methods of investigation. These perceived the necessity of affirming that belief in God is a demand not only of conscience, but also of thought and the whole moral life.

They postulated His existence and, therefore, were enabled to discover a rational interpretation of the moral universe.

But later inquirers owed much to Kant and Hegel; for, these representative thinkers had traversed and explored a large part of the realm of thought within which evidence might be found for belief in God and moral truth. They took, as just stated, reason and logic alone as their guides; and therefore their conclusions left them and their disciples in the mists of uncertainty.

Subsequent inquirers, however, found many hints and suggestions in the writings of Kant and Hegel. They caught sight of gleams of light in the prevailing darkness; and, as just stated, they affirmed that God is, and rules in His moral universe.

But further, Hegel had attached much value

to social relationships, and to man's need of man if self-realisation was to be attainable.

Many, coming after him, laid hold of this truth, and gave great prominence to social life, and especially to the kingdom of God. Witness the testimony of Schleiermacher and Rothe on the Continent; and of Maurice and Kingsley in our own country. These rescued the solidarity and brotherhood of man from neglect, and restored them to their legitimate place.

This was urgently required in the interests of a larger view of life. For a very long time individualism had reigned and ruled. The Reformation and, two centuries later, Romanticism, in its protest against the narrow limits of the eighteenth-century Rationalism, had elevated and glorified the individual. The Guild Life of mediæval times, which was a splendid witness to brotherhood and a common social life, was a thing of the distant past. The individual's rights and freedom were strenuously advocated. Society with its unity and community of interests was entirely neglected. Utilitarian morals, and the principle of "every man for himself," ruled supreme in politics, in commerce, and even in religion.

The idea of the kingdom of God was scarcely present to the minds of men. Foreign Missions

were openly scouted by leading Churchmen, and the social mission of the Church was entirely overlooked.

But the inevitable reaction took place. As Hegel, Schleiermacher, and Goethe revolted against rationalism, so Ritschl and his followers led in another revolt, and sought greater freedom and the realisation of a true humanism in social relationships.

A new movement was everywhere manifesting itself. At first it was slow, but it soon gathered momentum.

One does not readily associate the Reformation, a great religious transformation, with the French Revolution, a great political upheaval; but if one is to trace the history of the quest for the highest ethics, the political Revolution must be taken into account.

Though it was accompanied with thousands of cruel and indefensible actions, yet, rightly understood, it was the assertion of the claims of society. It lacked moral character and fibre, but it called attention to social obligations in the most tragic manner.

The truth is, the new movement was felt everywhere, and very soon philosophers were engaged in the task of trying to rationalise and explain it. Stripped of its excrescences, it was seen to be a loud protest against the evils of

individualism, pressed harshly to its logical issues.

When men had time to reflect, ethics came to its own. Social life was recognised as its legitimate sphere.

Those, however, who rightly interpret the movement do not overlook the claims of ethics on the individual, but while insisting upon personal honour and nobility of character, they also lay great emphasis upon social life and its obligations.

To-day, indeed, all schools lay stress upon the social element. The social problem asserts itself in all civilised communities. There is no exception. Workmen and scholars alike recognise the presence of social questions, and the more enlightened among them affirm that the awakening of the social conscience gives to ethics a splendid opportunity for displaying its power.

Those especially who make morals their chief study are, therefore, all for a return to social life, as the province within which ethics can be tested and tried.

Abstract questions have to-day little interest for them. Nor are they any longer satisfied with the theory of utility as an explanation of the moral life. Even pragmatists who deny all truth and reality, unless such as have "a mean-

ing" and are "workable," are among the loudest in their demand for a return to social life, with its real difficulties and perplexities, as that sphere wherein ethics will prove its worth.

Strange at first sight as it may appear, yet is it true that both Ritschlianism, which postulates the existence of God, and Pragmatism, which accepts nothing without proof, demand a wide field of human activities, and both insist that social life must receive more and more attention.

III

The brief excursion which has been made into the field of philosophic history reveals two things plainly—first, that ethics ever requires, as its foundation, a metaphysic, or a belief in a supreme Being; and next, that ethics ever demands a simple, yet reasoned statement of its content, which is only verified in social life.

1. When the foundation of ethics is under review, one may say that he is dealing with the *metaphysical*, another may hold that he is dealing with the *religious*; but the terms used do not alter the fact that man must postulate the existence of God, or something corresponding to his conception of God, if he is to find a satisfactory explanation of the origin and character, the nature and aim, of ethics.

Now, the Christian Faith assumes the exist-

ence of God. It does, however, far more ; for it makes God known. It tells us what we most urgently desire to know concerning Him. It opens the door to the wide realm of truth and reality. Its ethics draws inspiration from the Person and teachings of Christ, who reveals the Father and His redemptive Purpose. The Christian Faith may or may not be accepted ; but all that it affirms and requires, all that it gives and promises, are quite plain.

2. The Faith states in the clearest and simplest language its ethics ; and also the claim made on behalf of its ethical teachings, that these are fully realised in social life. It submits its statement to the searchlight of reason. It invites attention to, and courts investigation of, the luminous moral truths which it enunciates and enforces, while it also affirms that these are valid both for the individual, and society.

But since *creed* is often substituted for *conduct* great care should always be taken to observe what is submitted to the searchlight of reason.

It is not dogma, or theories, or speculation. It is not an abstraction of any kind, but moral truth which meets the needs of the individual, and is valid for men in their social relationships.

For man is not a separate and independent unit. His life cannot be realised even in the most splendid isolation. His fellow-men are for

him a necessity ; and, therefore, the moral truth which avails for and satisfies him must equally avail for and satisfy his fellow-men.

It has ever been the claim of the Christian Faith that it reveals moral truth which prevails, and avails for all. It has also ever affirmed, even when Christian men mistakenly strove for satisfaction in a narrow particularism, that the truth which it reveals must be tested and tried in the common social life. There it vindicates its power, and gives abundant evidence that it can transform society.

The social, as well as the individual life is its legitimate sphere. Within that sphere dark enigmas, perplexing problems, and hard tasks lie ; but the Christian Faith with its high ethics claims that it can solve enigmas and problems, and give strength for the hardest tasks.

IV

But here also great care should be taken to ascertain how it affects all these ends. Having revealed the truth which man needs, and the power which can regenerate and transform human life, it challenges attention first by its great saving message, and next by its moral teachings.

The one, however, is never separated from the other. Both go together and ensure life

and freedom. Whatever a person's attitude towards the Faith may be, or his estimate of Christian ethics, it must always be insisted upon, and remembered, that the saving message and ethical teachings are a whole, and cannot be severed into parts.

This being accepted, then is it seen that Christian ethics avails for the individual and for society. It rests upon Him whose light-flashing utterances give the solution of the darkest of problems, personal and social, and reveal the secret of the moral universe.

Laboured research is, therefore, no longer required in order to be able to make the postulate that God is, and is knowable ; and that through the knowledge of Him mastery is gained over the world.

It was, however, a splendid assumption which philosophy in its search for moral values made when it postulated the existence of God, since not otherwise, as the labours of Kant and Hegel, as well as those of many present-day philosophers, prove, could the world, or man, or truth be understood.

In the universal quest for moral values a further advance was made, when it was perceived that to effect self-realisation man needs his fellow-men, and that in order to verify truth and reality, he requires a social sphere within which

real duties, dark problems, and severe crises are encountered.

These findings, after long and patient investigation, have given deep satisfaction to many earnest inquirers. Their path is now clearer. They move forward with firmer step, while theirs has also been the distinction of giving a great impulse to social betterment, and useful direction to men who have a passion for improving the lot and condition of the struggling poor.

V

But it must be repeated that these same findings have from the beginning been set by the Christian Faith in the most prominent place. The Master looking over the coming ages, and foreseeing the eager search for truth and freedom which men would make, uttered the life-directing words: "If ye continue in My word *then* are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Thus, obedience to His teachings is the verification of truth and the guarantee of freedom.

It will repay one to weigh this great utterance for a moment.

Christ is the Word of God. The term describes what He is, and also what He teaches. He is the Word, the Expression, the Revelation of God. He is likewise the Teacher of men.

The words which fell from His lips are words of grace, truth, and wisdom. All that He is, all that He has done, all that He teaches must, therefore, ever be the subjects of reverent thought, and the inspiration of all who trust in Him; and to continue in His word in this profound sense of the term is the guarantee that the quest for moral values will be rewarded. Truth will be known and freedom enjoyed.

Christ thus throws a new light across man's path. He shows the way of life. He imparts a new moral power to human life, and gives it a new direction.

Whoever then renders obedience to Christ, and continues in His word, shall know truth in ever fuller and fuller degree, and to him ever wider and clearer visions of truth shall be given. Truth being his element and atmosphere he shall also be made free; and enjoying freedom he shall have all the conditions under which a useful life can be lived.

It may seem paradoxical to affirm that "in servitude to the truth liberty is enjoyed"; but not, if the truth itself be rightly understood; for, it ministers directly to nobility of life. It is consonant also with the highest wisdom; and, as the Stoics taught, "The wise alone are free."

Thus, the Christian Faith shows how, and from what motives the strongest and noblest

life can be lived. Thus, also, it meets the new situation and answers the quest for moral values.

But here again it must be acknowledged that all who profess to accept the Christian Faith do not perceive its moral implications. Some are wholly satisfied with an imperfect realisation of their professed beliefs. Others fear the prevalence of "ethical teaching" lest the great doctrines of the Faith be neglected, not perceiving that ethics is the flower and fruit of the doctrines.

Earnest moralists have, therefore, made severe and not unjustifiable comments upon the defects in the conduct of professors of the Faith; and some mistaking these defects for defects in Christian ethics have set aside the moral teachings of the Faith as inadequate for life.

This mistake prevailing, it is not surprising that serious objections have been taken to Christian ethics; and that some have endeavoured to discover new moral values, valid for life in all its phases, and under every possible condition.

The very fact that objections have been urged constitutes the amplest justification for a re-examination of the foundation and nature, the motives and aims, of Christian ethics.

These objections cannot be left unanswered. All who accept the Christian Faith must bring its high ethics to the test and trial in social life.

VI

It must now be plain beyond the possibility of doubt that the ethical teachings of Christianity have been deliberately challenged by representative men, who claim to be able to offer a new philosophy of life, and a table of new moral values ; that recent research within the moral province, and a philosophic criticism of Christian ethics have created a new situation which needs to be carefully examined ; that ethics must have for its foundation belief in God ; that the ethical teachings of the Christian Faith must be tested and tried in the common social life of the day with its dark enigmas, heavy burdens, worrying anxieties, and grave crises ; and that above the confusing noise of conflicting parties the Christian Faith raises a clear voice, calling attention to its motives and its aims, while at the same time it submits its claims to the common tests of social life.

In view of all these issues the question, for the elucidation of which Christian morals are investigated, now requiring an answer is, What is of the essence of Christian ethics ?

CHAPTER IV

THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

I

IT will perhaps clear the way for a better understanding, and a more useful discussion of what is of the essence of Christian ethics, if it be carefully noted what is excluded.

1. All ideas respecting theories of ethics must be banished from one's mind when one is considering what is of the essence of Christian ethics. Christianity formulates no theories.

2. It never once attempts to establish a school to which its adherents must belong. It knows no schools.

3. It neither frames regulations, nor writes out rules of conduct. It in no sense relies upon forms. Formality and rigidity are foreign to its spirit. Schemes of duty receive, therefore, no notice, and categories of virtues only a passing attention.

4. It makes no formal attempt to reduce moral judgments to a unity. It effects, how-

ever, a unity, though not in a formal manner. It assumes that beneath all differences, and deeper than any of them, life is a unity. It attributes reality and validity to this unity, and therefore discovers a basis for common moral actions.

5. It is not a science of character and conduct. It is an art, and deals with practical duties. In the life and teachings of Christ it finds a standard by means of which all moral actions are tested.

6. It does not make a methodical examination of the nature of virtue. It simply and directly addresses its appeals to man's moral instincts, to his reason, will, and conscience. It commends virtue as that which belongs to the highest moral life. Thus, it deals with virtue, but not at all after the manner of the schools.

II

These things being clearly perceived, it should be stated and constantly kept well in view that the New Testament contains all that is of the essence of Christian ethics. The most perfect creed ever framed cannot be substituted for the New Testament. The decisions of the Church in Council, even in her best days, cannot take its place. All appeals must be made to the Scriptures as the final authority.

The Book itself is small. A large part of it deals with history, travels, and the statement and exposition of doctrinal truths. Relatively little space is left for direct moral teachings. Nor are these given in a systematic order. But how invaluable for life and conduct they are! No one can say that he does not know what is required from him. The path of duty is plain.

A prominent feature of the New Testament writings here demands special notice. Moral example and teachings run through the record of sacred history like a golden thread; or, to vary the figure, they sparkle like pearls in the sunlight even when great doctrines are stated and enforced.

As one reads the record or studies the doctrines one cannot resist the conviction, to which Shaftesbury among moralists was the first to give expression, that history and doctrine are largely given in the interests of the morals of the Faith. They receive attention for their own sake, but also in order that the life of the individual may be beautiful and useful, and that of society strong and healthy.

This may be questioned by those who lay more stress upon *creed* than upon *character*, or by those who entertain inadequate ideas as to what is meant by the chief end of human life.

On reflection, however, it must be manifest that the final purpose of redemption is a good life, a life devoted to doing the will of God, and thereby to the honouring of His name.

Hence it is that sacred history always exhibits the beauty of the moral teachings of the Faith ; and that all doctrines, even the highest, have their distinctive moral implications. The ethical element in them is not accidental. It owes nothing to chance. It is of the very essence of the Faith.

A characteristic of the New Testament writers should also be carefully examined. They did not go out of their way in order to discuss the ethical questions of the schools of their day. They never, indeed, set themselves to the definite task of dealing with the controversies of conflicting ethical schools. They left the contentions of these schools severely alone, and that because they were engaged with the supreme objects of life.

They were profoundly engrossed with the practical questions how a good life could be lived ; how piety towards God could be begotten and retained ; how faith in the Lord Jesus Christ could be preserved and strengthened ; how right and pure *motives* could influence His followers ; and how a final and worthy *end*

could be steadily kept in view by all who aimed at living a good life.

These things wholly engaged their attention, and they earnestly sought to realise them without discussing the questions of the schools.

It must not, however, be assumed that the New Testament writers were ignorant of the ethical controversies of their time. St. Paul and St. John give ample evidence that they knew them well. But neither of them seems to have counted it a profitable task to deal at length with these controversies.

They, like all other New Testament writers, were content to make their positive contribution to the good life, and to point out the *motives* and *aims* of such a life. That was their chief duty, and they confined their attention to it. They, therefore, laid down principles of moral action suitable for the people of their own time, and for people of all times.

If the careful reader of their writings now and again detects implied references to the controversies of the Apostles' day, he must also be fully aware that in the judgment of the New Testament writers the practical duties which they enforced far surpassed in value the logical niceties of eager disputants, who had little or nothing to offer to men and women suffering from hunger of soul.

III

If now, keeping these distinctive "notes" of the New Testament in view, an attempt be made to state what is of the essence of Christian ethics, attention must first be directed to the perfect life which Christ lived, and next to His teachings.

He lived the perfect life. He has given a perfect Example which all His followers must endeavour to imitate. Imitation of Him is, therefore, the realisation of the highest ethics.

All men, even those who do not recognise His Divinity, confess that the life of Christ is the highest that has ever been lived on earth. With one voice they say that there is none like unto Him. This confession is an invaluable witness as to what belongs to the essence of Christian ethics.

If it be asked, what accounts for this universal admiration of Christ? it may at once be replied that it is explained by His harmonious growth, His tender sympathy, His lofty utterances, His graciousness and goodness; but all these are again accounted for, because He was ever and always responsive to the claims of love, and demands of righteousness.

1. Love received its perfect expression in His life. Love dictated His actions. He was

ever obedient to its claims, and He satisfied every one of them. Love was essentially characteristic of Him. He embodied it, illustrated it, lived it. He could, therefore, say to His followers, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another even as I have loved you."

Our Lord thus introduced a new ethical force into human life. It came with Himself as light comes with the rising sun.

He was fully conscious of the value of the new imperative which He laid upon His disciples. He Himself had given ample evidence of the beneficent deeds which love impelled Him to do. He had proved its worth, and power. He had exhibited its moral beauty. He, therefore, imposed the new commandment, knowing that obedience to it would transform the life of the individual, and that of society.

He laid the foundation of moral greatness in love. He meant His followers to be frank and gracious, generous and loving. He did not, therefore, enforce an idle precept when He insisted upon obedience to the claims of love. He knew that nothing else would or could save the world, and banish selfishness, and greed, and all that is evil from it.

2. Our Lord was equally true to the claims of

righteousness. It was the all-pervading element of His life. He was ever "Jesus Christ, the righteous." He had supreme regard to the Father's will. He always did His will whenever the Spirit led Him, or disclosed the path of duty. He went willingly.

Legal enactments had for Him little or no meaning. He obeyed the higher law which the righteousness of God imposed ; and to live in perfect harmony with the will of the Father was His supreme object and aim.

Obedience to this same law and high standard was that which Christ imposed on all His followers. He required from them a righteousness different from that of the scribes and Pharisees. They were legal minded. Conformity to rules was their highest conception of duty.

By His own life Christ revealed the kind of righteousness which His followers must seek. He made plain the true motives of right action. Regard to the Divine Will must be supreme ; and all actions must be dictated by the claims of a righteousness wholly and entirely in harmony with that Will.

The essence of Christian ethics lies, then, in the two supreme moral qualities, love and righteousness ; and in these as Christ lived them, and displayed their beauty and power by His

actions. Christian ethics draws its inspiration from Christ. It is His life writ large in the lives of His followers.

IV

But Christian ethics would be very imperfectly understood unless it be clearly perceived that Christ related the conduct of His followers to His own Person and to His redemptive Purpose.

He based obedience to the high ethics which He enforced upon personal devotion to Himself. He required and still requires personal trust in Himself, the personal Saviour. This trust must be genuine and sincere, whole-hearted and entire. It must, indeed, be so thorough that all who submit to His claims will spontaneously endeavour to be like unto Him, breathing His spirit, and giving proof by their kindly, generous, self-sacrificing actions that they draw the inspiration to moral greatness directly from Him.

He said to His disciples: "Without Me ye can do nothing." Personal union with Himself He, therefore, always insisted upon and required. They were not for a moment to imagine that they could live the higher life apart from Him. He is its perennial Source; and therefore trust in Him, dependence upon

Him, and obedience to Him were and are the necessary conditions of that life.

But they had to take the further step, and see that His redemptive Purpose, while it included deliverance from guilt, also and specially had a good life as one of its supreme aims. They were redeemed from all iniquity in order that they might be "zealous of good works."

When one discusses Christian ethics one must lay special stress upon these facts. They designate that which is distinctive of the ethics of the Faith. They point to both *motive* and *aim*.

They also bring down discussions upon ethics from abstractions to daily life; for, if there be one thing more manifest than another in Christian ethics it is this, that Christian people who profess to take the gift of salvation from the gracious hands of Christ know well that they are also bound to live in union with Him, and to be zealous of good works. That is the very alphabet of their religion. They may be faithless, but they cannot be ignorantly faithless. The way of duty and the path of life are equally plain.

It will be seen in a little how wide are the fields of service into which they are called to enter, and how great are the social tasks which are laid upon them.

But here and at this stage of inquiry the new moral force which Christ introduced into human life and His redemptive Purpose should receive the greatest prominence. These guarantee all the equipment which is needed in the wide fields of service, and in great social tasks.

The one question alone remains, Will Christians see this opportunity and attempt to do justice to this Faith? The call addressed to them is very loud. Christian ethics is on its trial; and many failing to recognise any adequate response on the part of Christians to the high ethics of their Faith, turn away from Christianity itself, and assume that their chief duty is to try to discover new moral values, which can be made practical. A person must be blind indeed who does not see the new situation which has thus been created; and he must also be wanting in perception if he does not discover the causes which account for and explain it.

This is a suitable place for directing attention in a few sentences to a special characteristic touching motives of disinterested service. I refer to the fact that the Christian Faith has reversed the old order, and now makes privilege the basis of duty. Formerly the rule was, "Do this and live"; now the new order is,

“ Because of what you have received, in return do all that love and righteousness require.”

The significance of this reversal should be carefully observed. It is grace taking the place of law. It is also an appeal to all that is noblest in human nature. It likewise lays emphasis upon the stronger and purer of two motives of action; and it affirms that every consideration which gratitude suggests should be present to the minds of men when they are called upon to make sacrifices in the interests of the good of their fellow-men.

Thus not only is there a new moral force in human life, but obedience to it is placed on new grounds. This is quite distinctive of Christian ethics. Nowhere else does the same factor appear and operate; and special note should therefore be taken of it.

v

I have taken love and righteousness as the qualities which are of the very essence of Christian ethics. An analysis of the teachings of Christ clearly shows that all other moral qualities spring from love and righteousness, and that each finds its fitting place when prominence is given to these qualities.

I limit myself here to those other moral qualities which are peculiarly distinctive of

Christian ethics ; and I content myself for the moment with the mere mention of them.

There are three to which Christ constantly refers. All throughout His teachings emphasis is laid upon self-sacrifice, humility, and brotherliness.

First, *self-sacrifice* was often His theme. His own life illustrated it. He gave Himself to self-sacrificing service. "He came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." "He pleased not Himself." He never did His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him ; and He learned "obedience by the things which He suffered."

In His life from beginning to end there is nothing else which is more conspicuously displayed than His self-surrender, His self-sacrifice. He spent His life, His energies and time, in seeking the well-being of men. He "went about doing good." His life was one continuous act of self-renunciation.

He taught His disciples that they must follow His example. Self-sacrifice is therefore one of the great demands of the Christian Faith, and it is of the essence of Christian ethics. The law holds good morally and historically, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it." To this there is no exception ; and therefore Christ made it plain to all His

disciples that self-sacrifice is required from them.

Self-renunciation is a demand of the Christian Faith ; not, however, that of the hermit who lacerates his body and subjects himself to voluntary physical sufferings, but that of the person who subordinates his will and personal preferences in the interest of his neighbours' good. This is one of the distinctive notes of Christian ethics.

But the motive-power of this fine moral quality is love. That is its spring. There can be no continuous self-denial, in the higher sense of the term, unless love prompts it. Where love burns as a passion of the heart no sacrifices are counted too great to be made. Love makes self-renunciation easy. One under the influence of strong feeling may perform daring deeds of self-denial ; or one from a sense of duty, like the soldier, may give one's life in defence of hearth and home ; or one may retreat to the hermit's cell through a mistaken conception as to how the highest life is realised ; but one only gives oneself to devoted service for the good of neighbours when and where love rules and reigns.

It has already been stated, as distinctive of Christian ethics, that Christ based obedience upon personal devotion to Himself. When

insisting upon self-sacrifice He gave a fine illustration of the need for such devotion. "Whosoever," He said, "will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it." Inspiration to self-sacrificing service comes from Him; and "for His sake" must always be the motive of the services which are rendered.

I direct special attention to this distinctive claim which Christ made. Too often His teachings respecting self-sacrifice are separated from Himself; and too often even the devoutest of Christians forget that they must for His sake take the high ethics of their Faith, and apply all that He taught as to self-denial to the common affairs of daily life.

I know that there are those who scout the idea of self-sacrifice, and maintain that it cannot be applied to common affairs; but if, in dealing with Christian ethics, one's business is to try to discover its full content one must lay emphasis upon self-denial.

No one who has studied Christ's teachings can gainsay that He insisted upon self-sacrifice; and here the prediction may be safely made that if society is to be regenerated and transformed this supreme demand must be recognised, and Christians must set themselves to the task of denying themselves for their Master's sake, and thus find the motive and

agency by which social life may be purified and ennobled.

Secondly, Christ gave a chief place to *humility*. This quality, He taught, is the prime condition of moral greatness. Men may slight it, or confound it with servility; but ever since Christ set this Christian grace in its rightful place, and illustrated both its power and beauty by His own actions, all men of moral insight have recognised its claims.

Humility occupies a place of honour from which it can never be dethroned. It is the antithesis of pride. It is a cardinal Christian virtue. Whoever attempts the greater moral actions must first learn to humble himself, and be willing to do the smaller.

Fitness for the highest service is conditioned by fitness to render the humblest.

There are no exceptions to the operations of this universal law. All history gives ample evidence of the perfect harmony with which the law operates. Your morally great men have been those who were profoundly conscious of their limitations. They have therefore been men of profound humility. The brightest promises of Revelation are made to the humble. They are in the condition where it is possible for them to attempt and do great things. "Be

clothed with humility" is an imperative based on reason, and justified by experience.

Christianity rescued this grace from obscurity and neglect. It revealed the moral power which belongs to humility, and it showed the wide province of useful service within which it could operate. Humility is, therefore, a pre-eminent Christian virtue. Without it a man's life, however otherwise distinguished, is bereft of moral beauty.

But here, as in relation to other moral qualities of the highest value, Christ associates humility with Himself. Without a trace of pride or vanity He could say to His followers: "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." He Himself stooped to the lowest position. "He emptied Himself." He who did not count it a prize to be regarded as equal with God took the form of a servant. His humility was the condition of His highest honour, wherefore He has been highly exalted.

He taught men to take His own life as the embodiment of true humility, and to frame their lives after the example which He gave to them. He thus pointed out the way to useful service and lasting honour.

This is now a commonplace truth, and perhaps for that reason it may receive little or nothing of the attention which is due to it; but

we shall see that if society is ever to be transformed, and the lives of the tens of thousands who suffer from the greed and selfishness of their fellow-men are to be relieved of distress and lightened, this prime moral quality must be brought into operation. Without it there is no hope for men or for the future.

Thirdly, Christ taught *brotherliness*. One can easily perceive how He insisted upon a brotherly spirit. Self-sacrifice and humility require such a spirit. It is the outcome of love; and it was, therefore, natural for Christ to insist upon the cultivation of a brotherly disposition.

Accordingly, in all His teachings there is nothing else that is more distinctive of them than the world-wide message, which by the hands of His Apostles He sent to men of all lands and of all times. He broke down the partitions which men had erected between nations. He addressed the glad tidings of His kingdom to all without distinction of race or clime. He permeated the minds of His disciples with the truth that love to one's neighbour is an imperative of His kingdom, and must be obeyed by every one who claims a place in that kingdom. No exceptions are possible.

“Love thy neighbour as thyself” is now

therefore another commonplace, but it should not be forgotten that brotherliness is a distinctive part of Christian ethics. Christ was the first to teach it plainly, and to enforce it as a condition of discipleship.

It is not necessary to elaborate at this stage the content of brotherhood. Evidence will be supplied as to the important part which it plays in social reconstruction. Here it is enough to say that brotherhood is distinctive of Christian ethics, and that the claim thus made is supported by historical records.

I have attempted in this chapter to indicate what belongs to the essence of Christian ethics. This has been done briefly; but perhaps sufficient has been stated to make plain what is of the essence of the ethics of the Christian Faith. In the next chapter I shall make a rapid review of the history of ethical research.

CHAPTER V

ANCIENT ETHICAL RESEARCH

I

IF the value of Christian ethics is to be rightly and fully appreciated a long view of the history of ethics is essential.

The record of ethical research is fascinating. It is also a good guide; for when a wide survey is made it is then possible to see at what stages, and under what influences, larger and truer conceptions of ethics were entertained. It likewise shows what is the safest foundation on which an enduring social structure can be erected; and, still further, it makes plain what ethics may be safely taken as supplying adequate motives, and worthy aims for the betterment of social life.

Great care must, however, be exercised in order to read the history of ethical research accurately. The history itself is a long one. It needs to be perused with discrimination; for, it is very complicated, and nothing else

is easier than to lay undue emphasis upon unessential disputes, thus distracting attention from what is of prime value.

One has to read through many volumes in order to ascertain the opinions and conclusions of moralists of ancient and modern times. Writers on ethics are innumerable. They belong to all ages, and many lands. For the most part they were, as writers on ethics still are, men of keenest intellect, and profoundly interested in human life.

The task which needs to be undertaken is that of finding, and setting out clearly, their competing and often conflicting interpretations of moral life. An estimate of the relative value of their conclusions must also be attempted.

If in reading their writings one has sometimes to confess that one cannot see the wood for the trees, still an endeavour must be made to ascertain what they thought and taught.

If, indeed, the invaluable contribution which Christian ethics makes to the sum of one's knowledge is to be rightly understood; if all that is distinctive of Christian ethics is to be seen clearly; and if a useful comparison is to be made between Christian and other ethics, it is imperative that one should read history with the aid of the searching light which it throws upon the strenuous efforts that have

been made to discover a moral foundation for the individual life, and also for society.

II

Time will not, therefore, be wasted if a review be made of these efforts as history records them.

Ethical research begins with the Greeks. The sixth century B.C. saw the rise of schools of earnest men who thoughtfully examined scientific, philosophic, and moral questions, and strove to give a satisfactory answer to them.

These men were not, however, entirely free from the religious ideas of their time, though some recent writers have assumed that they were. Their religious background was coloured by the prevailing beliefs in the Olympian gods, Zeus, Apollo, and Athené, who represented the bright sky, sun, and moon; and in the Chthonian deities, Demeter, Persephoné, and Dionysus, who stood for the mother-earth, spring, and wine.

But they did their best to set these beliefs aside, and to carry on their investigations as independent thinkers.

Again, it should be remembered that certain moral values, like temperance, self-control, as opposed to violence, outrage, and insolence, were already held in high repute. The Sages

of Greece popularised these virtues. The new schools endeavoured to rationalise them. This necessitated a metaphysic, even at this early stage of inquiry.

Thales of Miletus early in the sixth century B.C. discarded the Olympian gods, and was all for a scientific explanation of the world and human life. He sought for a universal principle which would explain all things, and convinced himself that it was to be found in *water*. It is, he held, the fundamental element.

Anaximander, born 610 B.C., and a pupil of Thales, went far beyond his master, and propounded a theory of evolution as well as one that has the appearance of pantheism; for all things, he taught, are dependent upon an infinite primal substance without limit in space or time. From this they emerge, take shape, discharge their functions, and return again to it. Nothing has the right to rest still. Each thing fulfils a definite purpose.

This is the eternal cosmic law; and the law of the State is based upon it, as is also justice.

One sees how ethics comes from this cosmogony. It is a scientific attempt to give a basis to ethics, and it has its own value.

Anaximenes, the successor of Anaximander, developed his master's theory, but he made *air* the eternal substance.

Pythagoras, who flourished at the end of the sixth century B.C., represents a new school of thought. He was at once a religious teacher and a student of nature.

He founded a kind of "retreat" for his followers in order to the cultivation of the perfect life.

He also coined the term, *philosopher*. He saw the world full of apparent contradictions, opposites, and antinomies, such as good and evil, light and darkness, rest and motion. He was among the first to postulate an eternal something deeper than all differences—some say it was *number*, but this is uncertain—as that which superintends all things, reconciles contradictions and brings order out of chaos, and good out of evil.

Heraclitus, who also belongs to the close of the sixth century B.C., made *fire* the universal principle of all things. He was among the first of those who separated philosophy from science. He found all things in flux, and a prevailing relativity everywhere, but also a universal principle of law and order to which he gave the name, *Logos*.

This principle enabled him to give a rational interpretation of nature and also of human life. All conduct, he insisted, must conform to law and order; ethics rests on this law.

He thus emphasises conclusions to which Anaximander had come.

As one reads the history of those early times, before one's vision pass in succession Zenophanes who made the *earth* the universal principle of all things and who was the determined opponent of the old poets with their fabulous stories and Olympian worship; Parmenides who belongs to the fifth century B.C., and made *Being* to consist of one uniform, limited, luminous sphere, to which he ascribed intelligence, which again is pantheism writ large, and was destined to affect powerfully all subsequent thought, even to the present time; Anaxagoras who taught that the sun and moon are only material, and are governed by *Nous*, Reason, which sets all things in order; Zeno of Elea, the exponent of Parmenides, and yet one who travelled far beyond his master; Empedocles who combined all "the principles" of former thinkers, and attempted to give to *water, air, fire*, etc., each its own place and function; and Melissus, the sailor philosopher, who while following Parmenides conceived absolute Being as without limit of time or place, a grand conception which afterwards bore much fruit.

Leucippus, the author of the atomic theory, and Democritus, its ablest exponent, occupy a place which is all their own.

Atoms, they taught, are solid, indivisible, eternal, and indestructible. Leucippus was the first to attempt an explanation of the world and all heavenly bodies by his theory of the operations of these atoms—a guess to which modern science owes much.

But it was reserved for Democritus to develop this theory and to build upon it not only a theory of knowledge, but also one of conduct. The senses, he held, give and in some measure interpret appearances; reason submits them to a further analysis and ultimately reaches reality.

With these results as his working theory Democritus declared for a contented mind as the highest end of life; and from this again deduced many moral maxims, giving a chief place to moderation, to persuasion as against compulsion, and to the State whose interests are supreme and guarantee the good of all.

It would be too much to look to Democritus for an all-satisfying theory of morals. One can easily perceive the hiatus here and there in his moral deductions from atomism; but it needs to be remembered that he was a man of his times, and that he owed much to his predecessors so far as moral teaching is at issue.

With all the Greeks of his day the concept of "universal order," and the precept of "self-

control," had powerful determining influences on conduct; and it is to these that he gives expression consciously or subconsciously—his theory of atomism apart.

The Sophists, Protagoras, Hippias, Prodicus, Gorgias, Agathon, and Alcidamas entered into fields much better prepared for cultivation than many of their critics of to-day seem to remember.

They were the heirs of the rich heritage which the great thinkers of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. had handed on to them. They themselves, if noted for their scepticism, were also remarkable for their culture.

What use they made of their heritage and learning is still a question much disputed. In the deliberate judgment of many of their contemporaries they brought philosophy into disrepute by taking fees for their instruction. This is now a common practice and never condemned. An opposite, and indeed an extreme, position is now almost generally adopted. It is assumed that your highly paid are also the most accomplished and best teachers.

But this apart, the Sophists did not establish a distinctive school. They held conflicting opinions. They travelled from city to city; and perhaps the most notable feature which distinguished them from others was their protest against the old religious tenets of the

Greeks. Differing, as they acutely did, in opinion, and marked chiefly by their protest, they made for egoism. But it must be said that it is unfair to deduce from their teachings other implications than those which they themselves emphasised.

As to morals, they alternated between two theories.

Protagoras treated morals as merely a human product based on experience. He held by the variability of the standard of right conduct. Hippias, on the other hand, influenced by the teachings of Anaximander and Heraclitus, was all for a naturalistic interpretation of morals. He, therefore, based ethics on natural law. Some of his followers made wonderful anticipations, as when they said that nature makes no man a slave and that freedom is man's right. This was notably the contention of Alcidamas.

The Sophists thus prepared the way for moralists who came after them and imparted a universalism to morals, which again laid a basis for the common brotherhood of men.

But when all these things are acknowledged, it still needs to be remembered that the Sophists made "man the measure of all things," and that the main drift of their teachings was towards egoism. They had chief regard to the practical ends to be gained.

Their negations and egoism could not, therefore, be accepted as a final explanation of moral life. Their contemporaries recognised this, and many of them were prepared to listen to any one who offered a larger, and truer view of moral phenomena.

The appearance of Socrates marked accordingly a well-defined period in the history of ethical research.

He had a great and pure passion for man's well-being. A believer in the gods, yet he held that nothing could be known of physical nature.

Man was his study. Reason, man's greatest endowment, was, he taught, the ruling power in the world. To reason, therefore, he appealed. He did not create the science of logic; but he laid the basis for the science by teaching his disciples to observe the operations of the mind, its concepts, judgments, and inferences. When moral actions were investigated he laid great stress upon a right division of the subject which was treated, upon accurate definitions, and upon careful induction.

The results of his own investigations were a firm belief in *design* as evidence of a supreme Being who is all-wise; a passion for moral reformation; the subordination of present pleasures to future enjoyments; an insistence that conduct should be treated as an art, and

not as a science, that virtue is knowledge, and that self-interest should be subordinated to the good of the State.

Knowledge, Socrates taught, gives one the mastery over oneself. The Divine voice within a man is always in agreement with such knowledge. He was therefore the first of those whose ears caught the full significance of the imperative, "Know thyself." He was also among the first of those who interpreted moral actions by motives and not by selfish ends.

Antisthenes, the founder of the *Cynic* school, of which Diogenes was the most distinguished pupil, in part followed Socrates. He laid emphasis upon knowledge; he assigned to reason the chief place as the universal principle in man; he also held that virtue is the resultant of insight.

But he laid too much stress upon the human passions as evil. This led him to the scorn of all physical comforts; speculation and pleasure were alike discarded; and thus the way was prepared for asceticism.

The *Cyrenaics*, under the guidance of Aristippus, the founder of their school, returned to *pleasure* as the supreme good. They did not, however, countenance the isolating egoism of the Sophists; for they held that pleasure could only be fully realised in social

relationships. But beyond this they did not go; and they therefore made moral actions dependent upon external ends.

Plato introduced a new and powerful intellectual force into the study of ethics. As Herodotus was the father of history, he was the father of idealism. Socrates prepared the way for him by substituting knowledge for subjective opinion, and a moral purpose for external ends.

Knowledge, Plato maintained, was the greatest ornament of intellectual man; and he therefore set himself to the task of investigating the content of *δικαιοσύνη*, *righteousness*, *φρόνησις*, *insight*, and *σοφία*, *wisdom*. He ultimately declared for the four cardinal virtues—justice, courage, self-control, and wisdom. This is the classical list to which reference is constantly made in the long history of moral research.

It is in the State alone, according to Plato, that these virtues can be fully realised. His morals were essentially State ethics. The State was in all things supreme.

Plato made large use of metaphysics in his interpretation of moral actions. He discarded all earlier cosmologies. He also set aside the ethical scepticism and egoism of the Sophists. These could neither satisfy him nor help him to understand the good life.

After a long process of severe thinking he

ultimately propounded his famous theory of Ideas, and taught that the ethical concepts of justice, self-control, and courage are fundamental and express ethical realities.

These qualities are dependent neither upon subjective opinions, nor upon sense perceptions. They do not, therefore, vary with the varying actions which profess to give them expression. As Schopenhauer, who adopted the Platonic Ideas, as the true and only real explanation of all ethical phenomena, has in modern times affirmed, they are intuitions of the human mind and always valid.

According to Plato, the spiritual yearning for a supersensible moral beauty, the Supreme Good, has its origin in the idea and reality of the morally beautiful; and this Ideal is that after which all should strive, for only in the attainment of it can life be realised.

The contribution which Plato thus made to ethics is invaluable. Pleasure is no longer the end of life, but knowledge, insight, and wisdom, in seeking which "the soul finds its true consecration and purification."

But it must also be added that Plato's dualistic interpretation of human life led him to countenance the theory that matter is evil. This theory constantly recurs in all subsequent investigations. The Manichæans adopted it:

and in the Christian Church it issued in ascetism of the severest type.

Aristotle discarded Plato's doctrine of Ideas. For him the highest moral end is happiness, but happiness as the resultant of the activity of the rational part of man's nature.

He separates knowledge and insight from the moral virtues. Virtues are neither "modes of knowledge" nor "forms of reason," as was taught by Socrates, but they "imply reason": for they issue from the wise regulation of competing desires by reason. They are "praiseworthy habit,"¹ "a habit implying right reason."²

Aristotle is all for the contemplation of wisdom as that which lifts one to a higher plane, and gives the greatest amount of pleasure. "The more contemplation the more pleasure there is in life."³

Like Plato, he associates morals with politics. He indeed identifies morals with politics. In the State virtue is best developed, and the highest moral aim realised. The good of the State "is a grander and more perfect thing to attain" than that of the individual. It is nobler to render service to the State than to the individual.⁴

Thus, if Aristotle limited his moral horizon to

¹ Nicom : Ethics, bk. i. 13.

³ *Idem.* bk. x. 8.

² *Idem.* bk. vi. 5.

⁴ *Idem.* bk. i. 7.

the State, he at the same time caused others to pass from individualism to altruism.

This is a great gain, even though the altruism be of a limited kind. Progress is made in a right direction, and *that* is cause for thankfulness.

With these enlarged moral ideas present to the minds of men the next step was inevitable. Accordingly the Stoics, Zeno, the founder of the school, Cleanthes his successor, and notably Chrysippus, conceived the idea of the unity of the human race. If they discarded the Platonic Ideas, and declared for what is now recognised as a crude form of pantheism, they also made the ethics of the State pass into the ethics of humanity.

"Live according to nature," was their moral formula. Whoever so lives will, they taught, encounter duties of a universal character, and will also discover that he cannot satisfy the dictates of his own nature without caring for the interests of all men.

But universal obligations are not easy tasks. Sages, they said, may rightly and profitably use possessions; fools will abuse them. The wise do not require a strength other than their own, and the foolish do not deserve it.

Within the Stoic School itself one notices a steady advance. Their doctrines of pantheism

and determinism gave way, under the pressure of thought and experience, to belief in Providence and a moral order in the universe.

The later Stoics, breathing the new moral atmosphere which Christianity had created, consciously or subconsciously, gradually departed from their doctrine of *apatheia*, indifference to the condition of life. Some of them made a quantitative distinction between outward things, and held that suffering had disciplinary effect in the development of character.

The Epicureans stood far as the poles asunder from the Stoics. They are the true forerunners of all rigid utilitarians. Almost everything which is characteristic of the latter is found either in seed, or fruit in their teachings.

They made *pleasure* the end of moral actions ; but they emphasised the need for subordinating the present to future enjoyments. To them there is no such thing as absolute truth, and no objective standard to which moral actions can be referred. Everything is made to rest upon agreeable feelings.

The objection that feelings are too subjective, and are always changing, affected them as little as it does those who to-day stake all upon the feelings.

They set aside religion and all forms of idealism. They made an attempt to give to

morals a new and scientific basis. The atomic theory was held to explain all things.

In adopting this theory, they acted in a manner which some modern exponents of moral life have successfully, though perhaps unconsciously, imitated.

They had little or nothing to learn; they were quite sure of their ground, and they were dogmatic.

Epicurus, the founder of this school, was, for instance, as unwilling to admit that he owed anything to his predecessor as was Spencer that he owed anything to a writer like Huxley, or, indeed, to any one else.¹

This parallel is significant, and suggests the question: Is the claim to be able to set morals on a new basis, and to give to them a truly scientific interpretation, one which a certain class of thinkers are specially tempted to make? One should like an answer to this question. It would be very illuminating.

But however this may be, it is certain that Epicurus disclaimed all indebtedness to Leucippus and Democritus, the two original exponents of the atomic theory.² It need scarcely be said that this theory has been

¹ *Vide, Various Fragments*, p. 117, and *Principles of Ethics*, vol. iv. appendix A.

² *Vide* CICERO, *De Fin*; i. 6.

discarded as an explanation of the world, of man, and of morals.

But apart from his theory, Epicurus outlined a moral system. One may reject it, but one cannot say that it is unintelligible. As already stated, it is, indeed, identical with utilitarianism, and as such it has its distinct claims.

III

One is conscious of a great change when one passes into Christian times. Christianity introduced a new ethical force into human life. The love of Christ became the powerful motive which influenced conduct and moulded character. This gave, therefore, to ethics a new meaning : it robed it with a new power, and at the same time gave it a wider province within which to operate. Too great importance cannot be given to these facts.

But, as already stated, it did not attempt a theoretic explanation of moral phenomena. It enunciated its moral imperatives. It related obedience to the Person of Christ, and His redemptive Purpose. It said in the simplest language that He is the Source, the Example, and the Inspiration of the perfect moral life ; and that since He is the perfect, He is also the final type of human life.

With its powerful moral motives and its

high moral aims, the Christian Faith was content to leave to its adherents the duty of rendering obedience to Christ's commands without offering either a theory of morals or rules and regulations.

But it took the Church a long time to realise the rich treasures with which Christ had invested it. It was far from at once freeing itself from the influence of Greek philosophy.

The Neo-Platonists, for instance, Philo, Plotinus, Proclus, and others, were profoundly affected by Plato's philosophy of the Absolute, the Good. They, therefore, invariably attempted to connect this philosophy with what they described as the deeper experience of the Christian life. Absorption into the Good, indeed, characterised all Platonists, new and old; and their philosophy became the ruling passion of many who bore the Christian name.

It is not difficult to perceive how this idea of absorption into the Good could be related to certain phases of Christian experiences; but it must be added that the tendency of the effort to relate the one to the other made strongly for mysticism, and not towards a strong ethico-social life, which expresses itself in service and in social progress. Mysticism has always led to isolation, ascetism, and indifference to social advance.

But long before the Neo-Platonists were an influential school the Fathers of the Christian Church added to their work, as apologists of the great doctrines of the Faith, the task of explaining and enforcing Christian ethics. Their greatest victories were, indeed, often gained by insisting upon the value of their ethics. From the first to the last of them moral life, as Christ lived it and explained it, was their theme.

But not until the time of Ambrose did any one of the Fathers attempt a scientific treatment of ethics. Clement of Alexandria discussed many ethical questions. Origen, his successor, went further, and gave definite instruction in philosophy, which included ethics. Ambrose, however, was the first to treat ethics systematically, but he belongs to a late date, 340-397 A.D. Like all other Christian teachers, he took the classification of virtues made by Plato, and gave to them a new reading in the light of Christian truths. But neither he nor any one else went beyond this method.

When one passes to the Schoolmen, one is in the presence of earnest and acute thinkers; but they chiefly occupied their time in discussing theological questions. They made little or no contribution to the elucidation of ethics as such. With them comes what may be taken as the close of ancient ethical research.

CHAPTER VI

MODERN ETHICAL RESEARCH

I

It is in the writings of post-Renaissance moralists, and in those of still more recent writers, that ethical discussion is revived. All these are prolific, both as theorists and exponents of the content of moral values.

A rapid review of their dicta may therefore be useful. When their writings are submitted to a close examination, one sees the steps and stages at which they reverted to positions which the Greek moralists occupied. One also observes how they repeat in new terms old findings; but the distinct advance which was made by several exponents of moral theories can likewise be easily noted; and this is of chief importance; for, when history is carefully read, the clearest proof is supplied that Christian ethics told directly and often powerfully upon their conceptions of moral obligation.

Bacon separated ethics from religion as the

Sophists had done. He, indeed, was as insistent as they were in excluding religion. But Bacon was also the first in modern times to set aside metaphysics and to substitute psychology for it. He is the forerunner of that great company of moralists who are all for psychological analysis. To Bacon, public utility is the end of ethical action.

Hobbes combined the ethical teachings of the Cyrenaics with a part of those of Plato and Aristotle, whose opinions of the State he also reproduced. He taught that Society rests upon egoism, plus political order.

Descartes revived the Platonic doctrine of Ideas with its dualism. He gave, however, to dualism a new form and meaning.

Matter, according to Descartes, is not evil; but the union of body and soul carried with it, he held, a constant strife and struggle. Hence arise emotions, which the Will must master and control; and the right is done when this mastery is gained.

His interpretation of ethics was, therefore, both emotional and intellectual. With him moral ideas are intellectual truths. They are not, however, always easily perceived; for the mind's powers are limited and hampered by the body.

Descartes thus founded two schools of

thought ; the sentimental and the intellectual intuitionists. Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Butler belong to the former ; Cudworth, Cumberland, Price, and Samuel Clarke to the latter.

Locke occupies a peculiar position. He does not separate ethics from religion like the Sophists and Bacon. He breaks, however, with the intuitionists ; for, he refuses to recognise moral ideas as innate. They are not originally in the mind, which is a blank. Impressions come to the mind through sensation and reflection. But in addition, moral ideas come from Revelation, which is supernatural. These agree with those which come from reflection ; but reflection is supreme, and the standard of morals is therefore in the end subjective.

Of intuitionists two only need be specially mentioned, Butler and Hutcheson. Butler accepts Revelation, and gives a prominent place to its ethics, but he makes conscience, self-love, and disinterested benevolence the chief moral qualities ; and among these conscience is supreme. " If it had might as it has right it would rule the world."

Hutcheson deserves special notice, because he refused to allow to the desire to please oneself any moral content. Moral quality belongs alone to the effort to seek the good of others.

He was therefore among the first in those times to lay a basis for social reform, and to supply it with an adequate motive.

Hume resolved all moral actions into self-love and sympathetic pleasure. He is not an advocate of egoism, though he is an invincible utilitarian; for he makes the avoidance of pain and the search for pleasure the most powerful factor in the moral life.

His well-known theory of "the association of ideas" also, in his opinion, accounts for many moral actions. He likewise laid special emphasis upon the idea of Causation, and thus anticipated Herbert Spencer.

II

It was immediately after Hume's time that German moralists began to make their influence felt in ethical discussion. Kant set himself to find a firm basis for society. He was equally dissatisfied with Spinoza, who had reduced good, evil, and personality to illusion, and with Leibnitz, who made evil a mere defect.

According to Kant, moral law is independent of our sentient experience; and transcendental ideas are legitimate postulates of reason. He thus returned to the idealism of Plato; but he made conscience supreme. "The categorical imperative" rules in the final court of appeal.

Fichte followed Kant, and developed still further the ethics peculiar to idealism. He placed the sensuous and moral worlds in direct opposition, and held that the moral ideal is to strive after realising one's destiny by the subjection of the sensuous to the moral. In such striving, development takes place. His theory of development is his chief contribution to ethics.

Schelling, the teacher who gave to Hegel a strong impulse to philosophic studies, was a strenuous advocate of idealism. He followed Fichte; but whereas the latter wholly subordinated the natural to the spiritual, Schelling sought a principle of interpretation which would reconcile nature and spirit. This he found in intellectual intuition. He thus prepared the way for Hegel with his doctrine of Identity, and also for Schopenhauer with his theory of intuitions of time, space, and causality.

Hegel stands out prominently among exponents of ethics. He enlarged Plato's idealism, and gave to it a philosophic basis. His philosophy of the Absolute was propounded in the interests of ethics. His aim was to destroy both rationalism and materialism. His philosophy, however, has somewhat obscured his ethical *end*, to attain which was, he held, the supreme business of human life.

The position which Hegel occupies in the

philosophic movement can now be easily understood. He was all for intellectualism. His name stands for the theory of Identity of subject and object. Reason reconciles all apparent differences as between subject and object. It discovers a unity deeper than all differences. It is also the secret of "the thing in itself," which Kant declared to be unknowable ; and it provides the dialectic process as that by the aid of which God himself is apprehended.

Hegel thus assigned a supreme place to reason. But in conducting his argument to its logical conclusion he sublimated the individual ; and the very wealth of his thought, which was always under the guidance of a hard logic, obscured, as just stated, the ethical *end*.

He was, however, often better than his theory ; for in taking over Plato's conception of the State, which he greatly enlarged, he found in social relationships the sphere of the right, and that therefore in which the moral ideal could be sought.

Hegel's influence on subsequent thinkers has been quite distinct. Sometimes it has been positive ; sometimes negative. A few follow him. Many oppose him, and endeavour to set aside his severe intellectualism and to bring themselves into touch with reality, with life, and all its tasks and duties, its problems and hardships.

Thus, Hegel's doctrine of Identity supplied Schleiermacher with a basis for his well-known theory of the kingdom of God, though he laid emphasis upon "a feeling of dependence" rather than upon reason. Rothe again developed the conception of social relationships, and made religion as embodied in the State a chief factor of moral progress.

On the other side, Ritschl led in a revolt from Hegel. To him Romanticism, whether presented in the form of a philosophy of the Absolute, or in that of "religious feeling," was too far away from the actualities of life. His writings are a protest against the severe and isolating intellectualism of Hegel.

He bridges the gulf, which Hegel attempted to cross by the aid of the steps of his dialectic process, by simply affirming that God is a legitimate postulate which man makes in order to secure the independence of his own personality, and to gain a mastery over the world.

Ritschl, however, did not stake much upon theoretic judgments, *Seins-Urtheile*, respecting the existence of God. He was all for value-judgments, *Werth-Urtheile*, and for leading men back to the daily life with its practical duties.

The enlightened Christian spirit and the long history of the kingdom of God supplied

him with a basis for religious beliefs, but the value of these beliefs for life must be found in religion, *as experience*.

But here and at this stage an important factor, which is now in all departments of life making its powerful influence felt, was beginning to assert itself. For the Ritschlian reaction was itself a product of the new liberal spirit which was manifesting itself in politics, commerce, and lastly, but most slowly, in social betterment. The concrete needs of the poor were crying loudly for redress. Tens of thousands, too, were in deep perplexity as to what to believe. Theoretic arguments did not touch them. The clearest metaphysics did not help them; and therefore a return was made to practical ethics.

Moral development, it was recognised, was the supreme object; and this development, it was further seen, could only be attained in social life. Thus, after a long, deeply interesting, but in large measure fruitless, research, men, who led in the van of thought, were driven back to the practical duties of everyday life.

This enforced return to practical duties as the test of the most sacred religious beliefs, and of moral values, is profoundly significant.

The philosopher travelling along his weary road, and encountering difficulties which, at

every stage, he must stop to remove, may render useful service. He must, however, retrace his steps from the by-lanes of abstractions, and return to the common road.

A philosophy of the Absolute may be thought-absorbing, but it scarcely touches life. To some minds the Hegelian dialectic is really fascinating; but again this, and all that appeals to reason alone, is simply unsatisfactory. Even "a religion of feeling" cannot quench the hunger of the human soul. Man must return to life, as Professor James phrases it, with its "real possibilities, real indeterminations, real beginnings, real ends, real evil, real crises, catastrophes, and escapes, a real God, and a real moral life."

It should be added that it is this return which gives to Christian ethics its opportunity and attraction, for in daily life it proves its worth and commends itself.

III

To complete this historical review it is necessary to go back for a moment to British moralists and ascertain what they were doing and teaching while Kant, b. 1724, Fichte, b. 1762, and Hegel, b. 1770, were developing their theories.

Bentham, 1748-1832, was the writer who

during this period gave to the theory of utility its most philosophic expression. Unconventional as to style, but terse, direct, and simple, he stated his conclusion in terms which could not be misunderstood. He strongly declared for utilitarianism.

The happiness of individuals, he wrote, "their pleasure and their security is the end, and the sole end which the legislator ought to have in view."¹ His interest in social reforms, as, for instance, that of *The Poor Law*, and his political fervour awakened by the French Revolution, led him into positions which his moral theory could scarcely support and defend; for, when he made "the good of others" a moral imperative he broke away from *pleasure* as an end.

Stuart Mill followed Bentham. He too advocated the theory of utility, but he departed further from it than Bentham when he declared for socialism,² at least, in a modified form; for, socialism is the very antithesis of individualism, which cannot afford a basis for socialistic measures.

Bentham and Mill are typical of the school to which they belong. Their rigid definitions seldom support their practical proposals. Like

¹ *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. iii. sec. 1.

² *Autobiography*, pp. 61, 162, 231-2.

many others they were, however, better than the system which they advocated.

The truth is that ethical theories are always more or less reflections of the spirit of the age in which they are propounded. But men break away from old positions in practice quicker and more easily than they can from their theories. Bentham and, in a greater degree, Stuart Mill are illustrations of this easy break when social reforms call for attention.

Reid and Dugald Stewart represent a different school. The negations of Hume, and especially his contention that the mind knows only its own ideas, powerfully influenced Reid as they had told directly upon Kant's investigations.

Hume's philosophy of life was altogether unsatisfactory to Reid. He felt himself, therefore, constrained to attempt a new psychological analysis. He sharply distinguished between perception and sensation as *media* through which ideas enter the mind. He held that there is a moral world, and a moral government of the world. He contended that these are independent of man, though man belongs to the moral world. He also maintained that the mind apprehends moral truths intuitively, and that moral judgments are common to all men.

Dugald Stewart did not make any special contribution to the problems discussed, but he possessed the gift of lucid exposition. His chief work lay in expounding and defending Reid's psychology.

Sir William Hamilton also followed Reid, and further carried on psychological analysis. Reflecting the influence of Kant he departed, however, in some respects from Reid's position. He sought a metaphysics as well as a psychology of moral actions. His doctrine of "the Conditioned," according to which to think of anything is to condition it, gave prominence to the relativity of knowledge. This was his chief contribution to mental and moral science.

Mansel, captivated by Hamilton's metaphysics, threw himself with zeal into the controversy which had been raised. It was his special distinction that he developed still further the theory of relativity, and endeavoured to show its theological implications.

Stuart Mill was a careful observer of all that Hamilton and Mansel taught. Neither of them gave him satisfaction, and while criticising their philosophy he insisted upon his own explanations of life, and gave to the utilitarian theory a new setting.

From this time and onwards a severe contest

was waged. Utilitarianism was placed on its defence. Its old positions were scrutinised; and under the influence of the attack which was led against it, new elements were introduced into the theory.

Neither pleasure nor happiness was any longer urged as its whole content. Hume had introduced "sympathetic" as a predicate in order to enlarge its meaning. Mill at the sacrifice of the most vital principle in his philosophy declared for altruism, and held that room could be found for that moral quality in his ethics.

Spencer, always unwilling to make concessions, held firmly by *feeling*, but even he was obliged by his very fidelity to the inductive process to give a place to intuitions, though in explaining these he stakes his ethics upon the contention that intuitions are due to racial experience and nothing else. But his explanation apart, what deserves special notice is that Spencer recognises the existence of intuitions. These are added to *feeling*, and play a part in all moral actions.

But even this enlargement of the content of the theory of utility could not, and did not, satisfy thinkers. The nineteenth century accordingly saw a great host of men eagerly intent upon a solution of life's problems; and

at the present time as keen a set of well-informed and able exponents as ever attempted an explanation of mental and moral phenomena are still prosecuting the same task.

Green and Caird restated and expounded Hegelianism. Comte and his disciple, Frederic Harrison, declared for a scientific interpretation of life, and for altruism in morals, though how that element entered where Science alone held in its hand the key of the temple of truth is not explained by either of them.

Schopenhauer and, at a later day of the century, Dr. Bradley and Dr. Royce, with many others, have set for themselves the task of trying to discover a new metaphysics. Ritschl early, and Dr. Schiller and Dr. James later, led a return to the hard facts of life, and sought a new interpretation of them, the former by means of "judgments of worth" and the latter by "the workable."

Nietzsche is the exponent of morals which he held would produce supermen. M. Maeterlinck has discarded the Christian virtues as needless, and returned to the old Aryan virtues. Professor Westermarck and many others are now, by the aid of anthropology, attempting to trace all moral actions back to their origin. They try to find an explanation in "moral emotion."

This, in brief, is the situation to-day. Questions of the deepest interest are discussed, but in the discussion utilitarianism, as explained by Hume, Mill, or Spencer, is regarded as far from having spoken the last word on ethics. Metaphysicians compete with psychologists. They allow that psychological analysis is valuable, but contend that moral distinctions must be interpreted in terms of entities which lie outside the purview of psychology.

Pragmatists with a strong hand brush aside all talk about ultimate reality and ultimate truth, and maintain that unless so-called moral actions have "a meaning" and are "workable" they have neither reality, nor truth, nor moral content of any kind.

But while philosophers thus argue and contend, the question which at present overshadows all others is, How far do the best endeavours of the great thinkers of ancient and modern times throw light upon the main purposes of human life? and especially, How far do their conclusions lay a solid basis for a strong, healthy, and enduring social life?

CHAPTER VII

ETHICAL CONTRASTS AND TENDENCIES

REFLECTION on the results of ethical research yields both fruitful thoughts and useful guidance when reins are given to it. The content of morals, the theories propounded, and the arguments by which they are supported, stand out distinctly and in clear outline.

At the earlier stages of investigation one sees moralists groping in the dark and trying to find a basis for ethics in the law of nature.

Next, men turn their thoughts in upon themselves and discover in reason, knowledge, and ethical concepts the explanation of their moral life.

Then the four great cardinal virtues—wisdom, justice, self-control, and courage—emerge and receive prominence. Moral actions are no longer interpreted in terms of self-interest alone.

Egoism, however, again and again asserts

itself, and ethics is resolved into varying modes and degrees of pleasure, hedonistic and eudæmonistic. But the vantage ground once gained, when it was perceived that ethical concepts are realities, and belong to the very essence of human nature, was never afterwards abandoned. The contest between egoistic and altruistic opposing theories was long and severe. Different settings were given to them, which brought out deeply rooted contrasts and distinctly marked tendencies.

1. *Pleasure*, as the moral end, was in its crudest lowest form associated with the sensuous, and frank open self-pleasing. But this setting of the theory was soon altered to one in which happiness was held to be realised through quiet contemplation, or in social relationships and in active social service. You see this in the Cyrenaics, in Aristotle, and in a representative man of modern times like Stuart Mill.

2. Where social life is made to supply the conditions under which happiness is enjoyed, altruism becomes inevitable, whatever one's moral theories may be.

Some may attempt to limit altruism to the State, but it soon passes into altruism of humanity. The Stoics were the successors of Plato and Aristotle. They enlarged the

theory of State altruism and gave to it a universal application and setting.

3. But pleasure, as the moral end, had other and very different tendencies. It led to the denial of the reality of absolute truth, and to the rejection of an objective moral standard. Nor was this all; for it allowed no place for religion, and no provision for the satisfaction of man's religious instincts and his deep spiritual wants. It also banished from the world idealism, and all the inspiration which idealism contains.

Such a theory of moral life did not long remain unchallenged. It was indeed at an early period vigorously controverted. Another theory not only competed with it and claimed recognition, but also demanded the first place.

4. Human life was accordingly interpreted in terms of ethical concepts. Moral ideas explained the moral world. The highest ideals were outlined. To strive to attain to these was counted man's chief duty. The realisation of them was the guarantee of the perfect life.

5. But this theory of moral life had also its own distinctive tendencies. Stated unguardedly and pressed unduly it led to a belief in dualism in human life. Evil clogged the steps of those who strove after the morally beautiful ideal; and evil, it was hastily assumed,

resided in matter. Matter was evil, so also were all the human passions. You see this in Plato, in the Cynics, and also in the Stoics.

Manichæism stereotyped this false inference. Augustine, the great bishop of Hippo, in Christian times, was in his early years wholly under its influence, and perhaps never entirely freed himself from it. Asceticism and the glorification of the hermit life were its resultants.

6. If this tendency became marked, on the other hand, the individual, the State, and humanity were greatly enriched by a moral theory which gave birth and support to idealism. This became man's heritage, and it was never henceforth altogether lost sight of.

For what happened? In course of time Christianity introduced new motives and clearly defined aims into human life. It gave great prominence to the teachings of Christ respecting love, righteousness, self-sacrifice, humility, and brotherliness.

These moral qualities are entirely consistent with a modified idealism, and find their fitting place in it. Paul, even more than Plato, insisted upon striving after the ideal life. He saw clearly in the Life of his Master motives of which Plato never dreamed; but with the great Athenian he was earnest in his endeavours

to commend what are ethically the highest ideals.

It is true that Paul did not, like Plato, reason out idealism as a moral theory. He simply appealed to the facts of human life. He found the moral law written in the human heart. He believed in the ideal life. He saw it realised in Christ. He had also a firm faith in the potentialities of human nature under the influence of Divine grace.

He did not, however, commit the mistake of making matter evil; but his doctrine of "the flesh," σάρξ, accounted for that which clogs man's steps in striving after the morally beautiful.

His reading of human life was truer than that of Plato, because he read it in a clearer light. To him "the Fact of Christ" was a supreme reality. He saw Him as the Redeemer from the guilt and power of sin, but also as the Giver of eternal life, "the life that is life indeed." He did not conceive Christ as giving to man a new soul, or new "faculties," but as by His Spirit renewing the soul, and giving to man's powers new motives and new direction.

These were to Paul the realities of the Christian life. They were his constant theme; and it may be added that all through the

Christian centuries these gifts of divine grace have ever received a loving, fervent attention at the hands of all true exponents of the Christian Faith.

I am well aware that it may be said, "These things lie outside the province of philosophic inquiry;" but they are facts in human life. Account must therefore be taken of them. And, if it be the rightful aim of philosophy to search for truth, since they are facts, they cannot be neglected by any one who makes a broad survey of life.

In Paul's view they were simply *essential*; and when he urged men to live the highest moral life and pursue the highest moral ideals, they were always present to his mind.

They still constitute what is most fundamental in Christian teaching and in Christian ethics.

In all subsequent research they are indeed never entirely overlooked. It has been left almost exclusively to writers on experimental religion to deal specially with them. But this is a grave mistake, which has robbed the Faith of much of its social beauty and power. Full justice cannot be done to them unless they be specifically and definitely related to ethics and social life; they inspire both with motive and aim, and give to them colour and form.

7. The moral theory, which interpreted human life in terms of the highest ideals, had another and very marked tendency. It led to the emphasising of social duties.

Plato taught that it was in the discharge of duties to the State approximation was made to the supreme Good. The Stoics substituted mankind for the State, and advocated social duties.

Descartes revived the Platonic Ideas, and gave a powerful impulse to Cudworth and Price, Hutcheson and Butler, who were noted for their insistence upon social obligations.

Hegel, like Plato, while finding in idealism the explanation of the moral world, returned to social relationships, and the rational State as the spheres in which the highest ideals are tested and tried.

Green and Caird, the modern exponents of idealism, again and again teach that it is in social life one realises, and only can fully realise one's own life.

This tendency is significant; and, as illustrated in the drift of the thought of some of the greatest exponents of ethics, it deserves the most careful attention. Not, perhaps, quite clearly did these thinkers see how ethics runs into social science, enlists its service, and, in turn, inspires it; but they prepared the way for the transition.

They saw plainly that to entertain the highest ideals, and to explain human life in terms of these ideals, is not inconsistent with social imperatives, to which effect must be given. Their philosophy of life rather necessitated the continuous discharge of social duties. To all of them human life was meaningless, unless man seeks the realisation of his life in service rendered to his fellow-men.

One needs scarcely to remind oneself that this is the most distinctive note of Christian ethics ; or that the poets of clearest insight have sung in melodious numbers the praise of service, anticipating the time when scrambling for wealth will be counted ignoble, and a man's riches will not be the measure of his worth, or the passport to the best society.

It must not, however, be assumed that the advocates of the theory of *utility* are, or ever have been, at least since Bentham's time, content to leave the wide field of social science to their opponents. They also claim it as theirs. At the sacrifice of all that is most fundamental in utilitarianism both Bentham and Mill entered into the social sphere, and, boldly advocating altruistic actions, rendered service of a first-class order.

This is instructive as proving the urgency of the claims of social reform, and, as such,

it should be noted and kept in view. Men sacrifice their theories in presence of the claims of their fellow-men, especially where poverty makes its piteous appeal, or justice its stern demands.

But this notwithstanding, the contrast between these two opposing moral theories remains, and is well marked. It is deepened when the contest rages round the questions of the character of the standard of moral actions and the unity of moral judgments. Is the standard objective or subjective? Is it justifiable to think and speak of unity belonging to moral judgments? From the earliest times these questions were raised; and they still carry with them a keen interest.

8. When the history of ethical research is consulted one sees the strenuous efforts which were made to interpret ethics in terms of subjectivism. Moralists strove to get rid of religious beliefs, and even of metaphysics. Psychology alone was admitted as a guide.

Utility in the form of pleasure, *hedonism*, or happiness, *eudæmonism*, was taken as the standard of moral actions. At a later stage, custom and "the association of ideas" were held to play an important part. It was contended that custom and experience, moulded by reflection, determine the standard of moral

actions. But all these depend more or less upon personal likings and personal estimates. In its last analysis, therefore, this standard is subjective.

9. Parallel with this theory runs that which is also its antithesis, and makes the moral standard objective. Moral actions could not, in the judgment of many of the acutest thinkers, be explained in terms of *pleasure*, however enlarged, or suffused with sympathy: or in terms of custom and experience. For them, therefore, the standard of morals is objective. It is found either in the eternal primal Substance of Anaximander, or the supreme *Good* of Plato, or the Universal World-Reason of Hegel, or in the Will of God as He has made Himself known through Revelation, and confirmed by man's moral instincts.

It would take too much time to trace in detail the steps and stages towards this final belief. I have sketched the history of ethical research with the view of showing in outline what representative men have held as their respective explanations of the moral world and moral judgments. This has been my only justification for attempting to make a wide survey of ethical investigation. Such a survey fittingly serves as a foil on which to set final conclusions.

Here, then, it must be regarded as sufficient to say that for Christians, at least, there is no other standard of moral actions, than the Will of God. I am dealing with Christian ethics. I therefore state the positions which all Christians must occupy.

But the doctrine of God and His revealed Will, as that which lies at the basis of Christian ethics, carries with it definite implications. Among them is the inference, that the standard of all moral actions is objective, because it is the Will of God; and another inference is equally plain: that when moral actions are dictated by a supreme regard to the Divine Will, moral judgments in relation to these actions are stamped with unity, since the Divine Will itself is one, and ever uniform.

I make no attempt to elaborate this final finding of a long and diligent research, which has been illuminated and directed by Revelation. Its implications, too, are self-evident; and these I do not, therefore, further emphasise.

I content myself with saying that a profound contrast exists between a subjective and ever-varying standard of moral actions—which demands neither a stronger motive nor a higher aim than what is inspired by utility, egoistic or altruistic—and an objective standard adumbrated by Plato, and established on a firm

foundation by subsequent idealists, and, above all, made manifest by the clear teachings of the Christian Faith.

The Christian standard of moral actions has long been before the world. While it appeals to man and finds a response from his moral intuition and instincts, it is yet outside, and, in a profound sense, independent of him. It makes its demands upon him, and these are so distinct that they cannot be misunderstood.

It requires, for instance, personal purity and honour, self-control and self-sacrifice, as necessary to self-realisation and the betterment of social life. It calls for a courage, which has a content that not only inspires men with strength in times of crises, but also sustains them in the discharge of the humblest and most obscure duties. It necessitates insight and knowledge; but it also points to the eternal Source, whence comes wisdom to the perplexed when they sit in darkness and see no light. It exalts justice, because it takes righteousness as the expression of the Divine Will, and the reflection of the Divine Nature. And, chiefest of all, it inculcates love as the saving power of the universe, and the mightiest and most gracious influence which plays upon the human heart. It gives the highest place to love, because love purifies the emotions, ennobles life, and makes sacri-

fices for the good of others an easy task and a light burden.

This high standard, with all its well-marked tendencies, challenges attention. Were obedience rendered to it, social relationships would be transformed, and social life enormously elevated.

But while this high claim is made on behalf of Christian ethics, one cannot overlook or forget further contrasts between it, and those modern moral theories which are associated with the names of Schopenhauer, Comte, Nietzsche, Spencer, Professor James, M. Maeterlinck, Professor Westermarck, and M. Bergson.

I have in other works examined the Positivism of Comte,¹ the Evolutionary Ethics of Spencer,² the Pragmatism of James,³ and the ethics advocated by M. Maeterlinck and Professor Westermarck.⁴ I should lay myself open to adverse criticism were I to restate what I have already written.

I limit myself, therefore, to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Bergson. Each offers a view of the moral world, and promises a more or less perfect solution of the evils of social life. Their claims merit a careful examination.

¹ *The Foundations of Society*, p. 64.

² *Ibid.* pp. 164-67.

³ *The Social Ideal and Dr. Chalmers' Contribution to Christian Economics*, pp. 291-92.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 287-91.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ETHICS OF SCHOPENHAUER AND NIETZSCHE

I

AMONG representatives of modern moral theories which are opposed to Christian ethics, Arthur Schopenhauer stands first in point of time. In my opinion he is also first in point of importance.

This, however, may be disputed; for the other representatives are without question men of keen insight; and each one of them has made a contribution to ethical thought that is of great value.

It could scarcely have been otherwise; and if the searcher after ethical values and the ethical factors, which make for the betterment of society, cannot, after an impartial examination, accept the whole philosophy of any one of these exponents of the moral life, he is none the less bound to take out what is good in every moral theory, and to give to it the place which is its by right.

It should be said respecting Schopenhauer, that scarcely any other original and powerful thinker has been more misunderstood, or more frequently misrepresented, than he has been. He has suffered at the hands of friends and foes.

His name in popular estimation stands for rank pessimism ; and that is sufficient, in the opinion of many, to condemn him. But there is nothing in his life, and little in his teachings, rightly understood, to justify this harsh judgment.

His life was singularly free from the oppressive anxieties of the *res angusta domi*, which so often not unnaturally breed discontent, and issue in drab-coloured views of life. He was able to travel from place to place and enjoy all the comforts of good houses. He was, indeed, entirely free from the cares which want of money produces.

But he did not live an idle life. He was an earnest student. His writings bear witness to his assiduity and his fidelity in the use of his time and great gifts. There was therefore little in his life to justify pessimism.

His style of living, his egoism and his philosophy, have, however, been severely and often unsympathetically criticised. He himself gave, it must be acknowledged, only too much occasion for the charge of egoism which has

been brought against him. He claimed, for instance, that no philosophical system was "so simple as mine"; that his treatment of old subjects was "deeper than any of my predecessors in philosophy"; and that his philosophy possessed all the "qualities that Hegel's lacked."

Much, however, can be said in favour of Schopenhauer. Thus, if he did not live according to his own ideal of asceticism, which he regarded as the destruction of a terrorising will, he disarms criticism by being himself the first to confess his own shortcomings.

If he was vain and egotistical, these, it should be remembered, are often traits in the character of men who are conscious of their own strength. Vanity, it may be added, almost always accompanies genius, when genius is untempered by the humility which comes from the consciousness of one's limitations, however great one's powers may be.

If, again, Schopenhauer started from a utilitarianism which agreed in many of its chief aspects with that of the schools, unlike most utilitarians he insisted that the concept of justice came not from "the useful," but from certain irreducible *a priori* forms and intuitions; and, contrary to popular misrepresentations of his philosophy, he developed, not pessimism, but a sort of

pantheistic optimism, and made absolute victory over the will, the ideal of life, and life's true *Nirvana*.

If he seemed to have a pessimist's delight in robbing the world of a simple faith, he was among the first, by his close study of the Eastern systems of beliefs, to lay a foundation for comparative religion.

If he found traces of "will" in inorganic matter, his well-known formula, "no subject, no object," excluded materialism.

If he appeared to countenance egoism, his own theory of love struck at the roots of all forms of the egotistical life.

And, finally, if, as is sometimes alleged, his ethics is obscure, that is because he, like Hegel, often lost himself in his metaphysics, and called for more attention to his philosophy than to his ethical teachings. He shrouded, indeed, his ethics by his metaphysics.

II

Now, when all these things can be justly said of Schopenhauer, wherein lies his pessimism? and how is he taken as one of the strongest opponents of Christian ethics?

The answer to these questions throws light upon his conduct and theories. He wrote and spoke strongly against the whole of Old

Testament Revelation, not perceiving that in the Old you have the seed which blossoms and flowers in the New Testament. Hence many have a prejudice against him.

But more than this, he denied that life can have an ideal. This may seem strange, especially if it be recalled that he professed to find in Christian mysticism and in Buddhism the final goal of life. But the truth is, that like many even greater men he was not always consistent in his teachings. If, however, his own statements be taken, it will at once be seen how he denied to life any ideal.

All satisfactions of desires, he taught, were of a negative character. They meant no more than a reduction of pain and discomfort. His pessimism, therefore, rested ultimately upon his deeply rooted belief that in the struggles of life the utmost that can be gained is relief from pain.

This was not an arbitrary judgment on the part of Schopenhauer. It was the outcome of one part of his philosophy; and here it is necessary to advert for a moment to his metaphysics; for, apart from his philosophy of life, neither his place among modern thinkers, nor his contribution to ethics, can be rightly ascertained.

In his great work, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, the *World as Will and Presenta-*

tion, he outlined his philosophy; and though he afterwards wrote much, and sometimes appeared to contradict himself, his chief teachings are found in this famous work.

His teachings may be thus summarised. He postulated certain *a priori* forms of time, space, and causality. These belong to the subject that interprets appearances, and are of the nature of intuitions. These also supply the basis of moral actions, knowledge, virtue, and art. Reason takes account of them. It deals, however, only with abstract concepts. It generalises and puts into available form all that is supplied by intuitions. Reason cannot give sanction or authority to ethics. Even science can render no effective aid in the moral domain. It cannot explain, indeed, the reality of anything. It is concerned with the observation of experiences of sequences, and can only make deductions from what it observes.

With these postulates and affirmations Schopenhauer set himself to the task of trying to find out "the thing in itself," the inner value of reality; and this he discovered in *will*. But there is that, he maintained, in the inorganic world which corresponds with *will*, and this he designated force. *Will* in man and in animals, force in inorganic matter, are all one and the same thing. It is, he held,

ever striving for expression. This ceaseless struggle, in his judgment, justifies pessimism. He sees no end to it; and for him holding by this theory there is no ideal.

But strangely enough, Schopenhauer summons reason to his aid. It can originate nothing; it cannot give authority for moral action; it is the servant of *will*; but in its higher forms and exercises, as when it deals with art, it may master, and bring into subjection the will whose servant at first it is. It may then rise to the calmer region of contemplation, and gain a signal victory over conflicting passions and the miseries of human life.

III

Schopenhauer was not, however, satisfied with these results. He had to account for moral qualities, and also explain wherein they enter, and give aid in the struggle against an almost irrepressible will.

Accordingly, he found philosophic sanction for justice in his theory of irreducible forms and intuitions; and, on the practical side, in his contention that justice rests on the recognition of the identity of will, wherever it exists. To infringe the will of others is injustice. Upon this he insists again and again.

He therefore approximates to the position

of utilitarians. But this position, it should be remembered, is now largely abandoned by modern moralists; and therefore his contribution to ethics is neither very great, nor very valuable so long as he is dealing with justice.

He took account, however, of other moral qualities. He gave a distinct place to pity and love; and, wonderful to say, even he recognised the need of "grace" in order to overcome the evil in the world, the evil especially which an ever-restless, irrepressible will is producing.

Pity, according to Schopenhauer, is just sympathy reduced to its proper terms; and this moral quality, as he explained its operations, is not a mighty agency of social betterment, but only an alleviative of pain.

Love, again, which has regard to offspring, is a healing, saving power; and it strikes a fatal blow at egoism. Love, however, is limited. It is not conceived as the great reconciling power of the universe, but only as seeking its own expression in its offspring.

Such is Schopenhauer's ethics. Out of it he constructs his theories of the beautiful and the good. He claims for his ethical teachings a power which is able to overcome the evil that is in the world, and therefore a complete redemption. His ethics, he holds, marks off

steps and stages toward asceticism as the final and highest possible state. Asceticism is, therefore, his true ideal.

The contrast between Schopenhauer's ethics and the full volume of motives and aims of the ethics of the Christian Faith is seen at a glance. His rests ultimately on negations, the denial of all that obstructs the way to Nirvana. Man, he says, is free "to will to live," and also "not to will to live," and this latter is the perfect state; beyond it there is nothing higher. An ethics which thus terminates can scarcely ever be a powerful factor in the ennoblement of human life, and the betterment of society.

IV

Friedrich Nietzsche is a very different man from Arthur Schopenhauer: different as to the conditions under which he passed his life, different in temper of mind, in his philosophy, and also in his outlook upon life.

Nietzsche early developed a talent for Art and classical studies; and all throughout his life the influence of these studies was always making itself felt.

This must be kept in view in reading his life. He had a passionate interest in Art; but he did not see, or, at least, he did not insist, that it is closely related to religion, which,

rightly understood, is a longing and striving for the Infinite, as Love, and for the ethically beautiful. The one reacts upon the other, and when free play is given to them the issues are beneficial to both.

Again, his study of the classics led to his having a strong passion for manliness—greatly praised by the Greeks—which he translated into power, and so made the possession of power distinctive of his philosophy.

His pre-eminence as a classical scholar won for him, on the recommendation of Ritschl, the Bâle Professorship at the age of twenty-five. For the same reason and about the same time Leipzig University conferred upon him the degree of Doctor.

This was, perhaps, the happiest period of Nietzsche's life. His prospects were of the brightest. His genius, his industry, and his honesty of purpose gave promise of a bright career. But clouds early darkened his horizon.

On the outbreak of war with France in 1870 he left Bâle, and though as a naturalised Swiss subject he could not serve in the German ranks, yet he accompanied the army as a hospital attendant. In Ars-sur-Moselle he fell ill, and never afterwards was he entirely free from the effects of this illness, which the hardships of the camp had aggravated.

He returned to Bâle, but broken in health, and also in spirits. He continued his lectures, with some intermissions, due to ill-health, until 1879, when he was finally obliged to resign his Professorship.

The next ten years, though years of severe suffering, were full of literary activity. During this period he produced the works which have made his name famous ; but they were written, it should always be remembered, under the most trying conditions. He was far from robust. He indeed suffered much, and, unfortunately, sought in chloral relief from pain, as De Quincey had resorted to opium, but with far more disastrous effects.

Illness followed illness ; and, perhaps, what was still more difficult to bear, his brilliant writings were issued one after the other without any recognition.

His attack upon Strauss, in whom he saw a type of German Philistinism, created a momentary stir ; but his really great and inspiring writings, marked by penetrating insight, splendid imagery, and poetry of the highest order, received the coldest of receptions. The effect of this on a susceptible genius like Nietzsche can be easily imagined ; and it is not too much to say that it gave greyness in colour and dogmatism in tone to many of his works.

The end of these ten years saw also the end of his literary life. In 1889, at the early age of forty-five, his health finally broke down, and he passed the next eleven years in a distressing, lingering malady, bereft of the use of his reason. He died on 25th August 1900.

This brief outline of Nietzsche's life is necessary in order to understand the man and his work ; for, as much as any person, and more than most men, his moods and tenses, largely the creation of the trying conditions under which he passed his life, reflect themselves in his theories and outlook.

v

His name is honoured by many to-day. The honour is well deserved, for he rendered first-class service in calling attention to the potentialities of man's nature. One may not be able to accept all his teachings respecting superman ; but this should not prevent one from cordially recognising his service in rescuing from neglect the possibilities which lie within man's reach. I shall show in a moment that this is altogether consistent with the high ethics of the Christian faith ; but here I am concerned with doing justice to Nietzsche's insight and with giving to him the credit which is his due.

Next, he is honoured, because he rightly

emphasised the *here* and *now*, as against those who relegate life's flower and fruit to a far-distant future. Perhaps he sometimes laid too strong emphasis upon the present; for the Beyond has its realities as well as the Now. But when this is acknowledged, it still holds true that what one's hands find to do is that which should be done with all one's might. The future will be coloured, and, indeed, determined by what is now attempted and done.

Again, Nietzsche is held in high esteem, because in combating the biologist's theory, *the struggle for existence*, he rightly points out that the law of nature is that of abundance and luxuriance, and not want and hunger. The only struggle which he will admit is that for power. He changed Schopenhauer's "will to live" into "will to power," and saw in this the promise and pledge of superman. Life itself, he held, is simply "will to power."

Here his readings as to this power may be wrong. I believe that they are not justified; but his interpretation apart, the fact which he emphasises is patent; and it is surely a great gain when men see and acknowledge that the amplest provision has been made for their needs. Little wonder, therefore, if the followers of the master claim for him an honour, *because* he

directed attention to the wealth and abundance of nature.

But further, Nietzsche is honoured because he rescued pity from maudlin sentiment. This was one of his greatest services, and it largely explains the vogue which he has enjoyed throughout Europe. Here, however, it should be said that it is somewhat difficult to accept his restricted use of pity, for he limits it to those who have a superabundance of power, to "masters by nature"; but again, his teachings apart, he has done excellent service in singling out pity as a powerful factor in life, and by stripping it of all that is fictitious.

To these signal services must be added this : that Nietzsche rendered great assistance to all who are trying to understand life and its obligations by giving to "environment" its own, and only legitimate place. A bad environment, he maintained, produces a bad type of man. You cannot get beyond this grave fact. Account must, therefore, be taken of it.

Nietzsche boldly faced this problem. He broke away from the metaphysics of Schopenhauer, his teacher ; he rejected the Buddhist conception of life. He postulated a will-life "as an active and formative principle" in all organisms. Do justice, he said, to this will-life ; change environment, transvalue all values, and you will

get a type of man, the superman, who is worthy of the race. This, briefly stated, was his solution of the problem.

VI

It is somewhat hazardous to animadvert upon Nietzsche's philosophy; for his followers at once say, whenever criticism is attempted, you heap terms of abuse on his head in order to discredit his teachings. Criticism is not, however, necessarily unsympathetic. It need not be indiscriminating. If defects be indicated, if even a man's theories and system be rejected, justice may yet be done to his motives, aims, and actual service.

Perhaps the best way to deal with Nietzsche's position, contentions, and conclusions is to set them out plainly, and then to ask, Are they such as one who has nothing in view, save truth, can accept?

1. He deliberately assailed Christian morals. He professed himself repelled by them. In his judgment they are weak and servile. They are nothing other than a weapon with which to gain power. They, are, therefore like all systems of morality, a mere artifice for acquiring influence. They suit a certain type of men. They, indeed, produce and multiply a poor type. They make directly for "slave morality." The righteousness, the love, the pity, the humility,

the brotherhood which Christianity inculcates have nothing to recommend them; they make for a wretchedly weak state of society, and are therefore condemned.

For these reasons he set himself to demolish Christianity and democracy, just as Mr. Blatchford has set himself to smash Christianity and the Liberal Party.

2. He scoffed at democracy. He allowed no place for the practice of altruism, unless to the strong, who had an abundance of power to spare. To all others he denied it. He made egoism the exclusive property of those who are on the ascending scale, the type-men, the supermen. They alone have a patent right to it.

3. He is the unblushing advocate of caste, and the bold advocate of exploitation, declaring in favour of "appropriation, injury, conquest of the weak, suppression, severity, obtrusion, and incorporation."¹

4. He banishes the Christian religion, and all that it teaches. He will, indeed, have nothing to do with the supernatural. "Dead are all the gods!" he exclaims; and then follows the modest *fiat*, "Now we will that superman lives!"²

¹ *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 226.

² *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, p. 91.

5. But what does he place in authority when Christianity and its ethics are demolished? Nothing, save morals of man's own creation : for morals are man's invention, an artificial agency for obtaining and exercising power. He resolves them into the simple elements of power and weakness. Power is good ; weakness is bad.

6. With this postulate, which has neither a metaphysic nor a psychology to support it, he proceeds to build up his new society in which new moral valuations obtain. This society is broad-based on mediocrity. First come the rulers, who are the great and powerful in virtue of their intellectual powers. Next, the physically strong, who are succeeded by the commercial classes, and these, again, by the great mass of toilers that have aspirations after neither equality nor brotherhood.

It is not an unwarranted judgment to say that all this is imaginary. It is simply the reconstruction of society by a fine poet, who has strayed into social life, and finds himself not unjustly disappointed at the poor, meagre lives of many who bear the Christian name, but forgetful that all who bear it are not really Christians.

The facts of life are against this reconstruction of society. Class distinctions unfortunately

prevail; but unless where based upon service they have no validity, and have neither the right to reign nor the authority to rule.

As to Nietzsche's contention that the great masses of the people are dull and without aspirations, facts, again, contradict him. For what is the explanation of the social unrest of to-day? Is it not that working men are awakened to a sense of their rights, and are strenuously and intelligently fighting for better conditions of life? They see the penury and toil of the ill-remunerated, and the lavish acts of charity of those who gather in the surplus value of labour. They utter a loud protest. They scorn these lavish acts of charity, and demand justice—a demand which could not be made were intelligence and aspiration wanting.

7. Nietzsche lays emphasis upon manliness, greatness, power, and allows, as already stated, a limited exercise of altruism and pity to those of superabounding power; but he does not further describe the content of his ethics.

The great, the powerful, have as their only conscious motive "the gratification of their inordinate will to power." That, however, does not lead one very far. Neither does it give one much light. The good of others than the powerful is entirely neglected, and altruism,

the saving power of humanity, is really denied.

Nietzsche refused to believe in a moral order in the universe. He accounts for the origin of moral valuations by a simple reference to love of power, and "will to power." These he leaves his followers to develop, as he himself attempted to work out new moral values whose chief content is *power*. This is an altogether too inadequate explanation of moral life. It neglects the morally beautiful, winsome, and lovable.

8. Christian ethics cuts right across Nietzsche's position and system of morals. It agrees with much that he taught, but it has many things to say which lie outside the philosophy of life. It insists, for instance, on manliness as emphatically as he, or any of his followers, have ever done. "In understanding be men," says St. Paul. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might," is his injunction. "I have written unto you," says St. John, "because ye are strong."

Christian ethics thus gives to manliness and strength their own place. But it far transcends Nietzschean ethics. For is there any ethics so lofty and ennobling as the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount? Until Nietzsche threw his thunder-bolts directly against the morality of

Christianity the morally *élite* of men have confessed the enormous elevation of Christ's moral teachings.

Christian ethics, again, does as full justice to the potentialities of man's nature as Nietzsche strove to do justice to them. It encourages no one to rest at ease, or be satisfied with mere comfort. "I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do," affirms St. Paul, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

It, likewise, opens out vast provinces of endeavour and service. The election of which the Christian Faith speaks is always an election to service, and to doing good to all men. "To thyself be true" holds in Christian ethics as firmly as in anything which Nietzsche taught.

But while urging these high duties it cuts across his whole position by disclosing new motives, by setting up new ideals, and by giving to moral life a content like unto which there is nothing in his teachings.

He was all for the ruthless and the strong. His ideal was the man who says: "I like that, I take it for my own, and mean to guard it and protect it from every man"; one "who has indignation and his sword, and to whom the

weak, the suffering, and the oppressed, and even animals willingly submit and naturally belong; in short, a man who is a master by Nature."¹ This is the type of man, he thinks, which makes the world better. Such a man may have sympathy to spare, and it is of value; but his moral qualities are those of power, ruthlessness, and self-will.

But neither men nor animals *willingly* submit to such a man. They may fear him; they may obey him. Willing loving service from them? No; that is a moral impossibility.

9. Nietzsche did not do justice to the facts of human life when he was all for the strong. He failed to perceive that the gentle in disposition are often the strong in character. Their unflinching rectitude has gentleness as its true element and atmosphere. "Thy gentleness hath made me great," was the keynote of a song sung long ago by a Hebrew poet, who entertained also the most exalted conception of God's power. Gentleness ever wins. "She stoops to conquer" holds good throughout the whole world, and is the explanation of enduring and praiseworthy victories.

I make only one more comment upon Nietzsche's ethics. His concept of power

¹ *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 257.

is that which overrides and overrules all things. A reference to the facts of life shows, however, that the rulers of to-day must, to use a political term, be constitutional. The wisdom of the ages fences him in, not so much with legal enactments, as with unwritten laws. The experience of the past guides his most imperial actions; and all history goes to prove that large contentedness among the people, civil freedom, and strength of the State do not come from the issuing of arbitrary commands.

Here the strong and self-willed have no place; the iron hand, merely as such, carries with it no authority. Obedience to law must rest upon something else. All laws must appeal to the moral sense of the governed, and win their approval. Not otherwise is a stable State realised; and if this holds good, power without moral content goes by the board. Society without generosity and gentleness permeating it, without willing service and altruism in flower and fruit, is doomed.

As one, therefore, reviews Nietzsche's ethics, one cannot, even when recognising fully his brilliant genius and the service which he rendered by re-emphasising forgotten truths, refuse to endorse the judgment of Professor Kettle, who says that "Nietzsche, in truth, was a man of ecstasies and intuitions rather than of

sequent thought.”¹ This explains his aberrations, his fierce onslaught on Christian morality, and his own reconstructed society, which neither history nor experience supports.

The contrast between his ethics and that of the Christian Faith is now apparent; and perhaps of all contrasts there is none greater or more deeply marked than that between Christian and Nietzschean moral values.

¹ See Professor Kettle's Introduction to Mr. J. M. Hone's translation of M. Daniel Halévy's *Life of Friedrich Nietzsche*.

CHAPTER IX

BERGSON

I

M. HENRI BERGSON occupies a prominent position in the company of the great thinkers who are devoted to the study of life. His brilliant genius and his strenuous industry have won for him this position. There is perhaps no other writer who to-day commands greater attention.

Some, it is true, have tried to discredit him and his work. Sir Ray Lankester thinks "that the books in which M. Bergson formulates his illusions are worthless and unprofitable matter, causing waste of time and confusion of thought to many of those who are induced to read them." He further maintains that Bergson by his perversion of facts "ceases to be merely an amusing juggler with the harmless creations of his own, and other people's fancy; he becomes a maker of untruth."¹

Those who, like the authority just quoted, see

¹ See his Preface to Mr. Hugh S. R. Elliot's *Modern Science and the Illusions of Professor Bergson*.

in Bergson only that which is to be discourteously discarded are for the most part materialists, obsessed with their materialism. They are devoted to science which, as Schopenhauer and, still more recently, Bergson, point out, tells us nothing but *sequence*. They do not recognise that to many thinkers the facts of the mental and moral life, when subjected to a reasoned treatment, require a metaphysic and a psychology as much as the facts of nature need a science of physics and one of mathematics.

But Bergson has many admirers. Mr. Balfour, a competent judge, speaks in eulogistic terms of his writings.¹ Bergson is indeed a writer whom all who seek reality and truth are obliged not only to respect, but also to admire. He has rendered service of the highest order, and all thinkers are his debtors.

He enjoys two great advantages. He has a comprehensive knowledge of philosophy, and he is well acquainted with the achievements of science. With great facility he enlists both philosophy and science in the service of his interpretation of life.

Next, he has a captivating style of writing. You may or may not accept his arguments and conclusions; but you are never at a loss to

¹ The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour in the *Hibbert Journal*, October 1911.

understand the meaning of his contentions. The easy, yet dignified grace with which he writes goes a long way to explain the vogue of his writing. He allures, if he does not always convince.

His manner in presenting problems is indeed enticing. In language ever lucid he seems to say to you, "Why trouble yourself as to what one writer says respecting another writer's contentions? Why have quotations and reiterations? Get rid of the weight of accumulated speculations; free yourself from prepossessions and prejudices; have done even with philosophies; look with me at nature and examine with me the facts of life, and you will soon discover incontrovertible evidence as to what is meant by reality."

But notwithstanding the apparent simplicity of his presentation of problems, it must be confessed that he makes tremendous postulates. His demands too on his readers are often of such a kind that those of them who are gifted or, if you like, are afflicted with the critical faculty cannot always easily assent to them.

Justice must, however, be done to Bergson. His investigations are thorough. He stands, calm and collected, in presence of the profoundest questions of human life. He discusses these questions with a fine charm; but it must be

added, that he sweeps away with a strong hand many of the conclusions of the greatest thinkers, and sometimes displays a little impatience, while insisting that he alone has discovered the true secret of reality.

II

Examine for a moment his position. His object is, to ascertain the ultimate nature of reality. He takes what he calls Life-force, *élan de vie*, as that which accounts for all things, animate and inanimate. He does not once attempt to say whence this Life-force or impulse comes. He simply postulates it.

Thus assuming its existence he maintains that in its operations it takes two directions. When and where it meets obstacles which cannot be surmounted it becomes a spent force, and passes into the inorganic. Matter is thus a by-product of the Life-impulse.

According to Bergson this Life-force is very mighty in its inrush. It is also ever letting out its energy, and "in organic life accumulated energy is realised." The Life-force is the duration of an ever-changing reality, an active process, a creator of itself.

It has the power of self-manifestation, and expresses itself in the manifold forms of the organic. Vegetism, intelligence, and intuition

are its expression. It has thus not merely one, but many expressions.¹

The Life-force becomes fully conscious in man, its highest embodiment ; but self-consciousness may belong to all animate things. How far down in the scale of being it goes no one can tell. Care must, therefore, be taken lest undue limitations be placed upon it.

Definite functions are postulated as belonging to the Life-force. It is, as just stated, an active process, a constant change, but degrees of freedom, according to Bergson, are implied in its operations ; "for it is by no means the case that conscious states blend with one another as raindrops with the water of a lake."² But, as will be seen, he refuses to the Life-force, even in its conscious expressions, a definite *end*. It is, he holds, without *purpose*. There is only in it, and issuing from it, a power which makes for ever fuller and fuller expansion and freedom.

Man being its highest known product, all that belongs to him can be interpreted in its terms. Bergson's work, *Matière et Mémoire*, is largely devoted to an interpretation of what is distinctive in man.

Mental states, for instance, which philosophers from the beginning have endeavoured to

¹ See *Creative Evolution*, pp. 179-191.

² *Time and Free Will*, p. 166.

elucidate, are examined with great care ; and nowhere else is the wealth of the writer's genius more profusely exhibited than when he is dealing with these states. He writes not only *con amore*, but also with incision, and with emphasis, though it must be added that it is not always easy to assent to his affirmations. His general contention is, that the Life-force in its operations, rightly understood, gives one the key to the right interpretation of the mental as well as the material.

The old controversies, therefore, respecting perception, memory, and other assumed attributes of the mind no longer need to be continued. New data, and new agencies, lie to hand.

Take perception, and examine Bergson's treatment of it. He affirms that rightly interpreted it bridges the gulf between mind and matter, and thus solves the old problem which has hitherto baffled all research.

This, says Bergson, is quite manifest ; for "perception of matter and matter perceived" is "but a difference of degree, and not of kind, pure perception standing towards matter in the relation of the part to the whole."¹ Perception thus belongs to the object perceived as to the perceiving subject. This indeed bridges the gulf, if one can understand how in perception

¹ *Matter and Memory*, p. 78.

spirit is materialised, and the material can be interpreted in terms of spirit. The difficulty is not solved, nor, indeed, is there much light thrown upon the question at issue when, according to Bergson's postulates, spirit and duration are taken as one and the same thing, and matter is held to have duration of a limited kind. For it is only on the acceptance of these postulates that the difference between matter and spirit is one of degree.

But, further, it must be carefully noted that Bergson's apparently simple theory carries with it a setting aside of all that is dear to psychologists. They have taught, and still teach, that perception includes an immediate and also an ideal element; and that while the immediate element comes from what is actually present at the moment of perception, the ideal is a concept. Bergson sets all this aside and holds that the ideal is not conceptual at all, but comes from memory. Memory ministers to the perceiving subject, and supplies that which makes perception possible.

It is interesting to watch how this new psychological theory is developed. For purposes of investigation memory, in Bergson's judgment, should be dissociated from perception.¹ When analysed it is seen to be of two kinds,

¹ *Matter and Memory*, p. 72.

due to "motor mechanism" and "personal memory-images" which picture past events: "the memory which recalls," and "the memory which repeats." Memory is thus largely, if not entirely, psychical. It is a distinct gain to examine it as to its content; but for all practical purposes it must, Bergson insists, always be closely associated with perception. The two go together and explain mental states. Perception owes everything to memory-images "which complete it, as they interpret it."

Together they help to bridge the gulf between matter and spirit. They are both active attitudes towards the external, the attitudes themselves being determined by our relation to, or our reactions from, the external. Following the path which they indicate we are led to reality as the goal. The argument again is complete, if all the postulates which Bergson makes be accepted.

III

Instead of attempting further to follow Bergson's subtle psychology it will better serve the purpose which I have chiefly in view, which is to try to understand his position in relation to ethics and social progress, if all that he rejects of the teachings of the schools be set out briefly. For, then, it will be seen what is the place which he occupies; and it

will also be possible to make legitimate deductions from his own teachings, even where he has not attempted to define or describe his attitude towards moral and economic questions.

1. In his interpretation of the operations of the Life-force Bergson refuses to give to teleology any place. He holds strongly that the closest observation of the facts of the inorganic, and the most careful examination of mental states, disclose no *purpose* operating towards a definite *end*.

Natural selection, explained in terms of modern embryology and palæontology, gives an adequate and altogether satisfactory account of all that "design" is assumed to make intelligible. But, as Mr. Balfour pertinently observes in the article already quoted,¹ if the Life-force be free, as Bergson says it is, then teleology enters at "the very citadel of necessity." This, however, is denied and rejected.

2. Bergson discards ideas as the essence of things. He, therefore, sets aside Plato's theory of Ideas, which makes ideas identical with reality. Bergson has no patience with those philosophers, Kant, the Associationists, and others, who revived the theory of Ideas. He maintains that so far from ideas being the

¹ *Hibbert Journal*, October 1911.

essence of reality they only come into existence with actions, or when actions are about to be performed. Our minds, he says, "are oriented towards actions." Life, therefore, in his view, cannot be explained by ideas.

3. He sets aside mechanism, and all mechanical explanations. He, therefore, openly and frankly breaks away from the modern scientist's doctrine of "fixed laws." There is, he strenuously contends, no such thing as a system or systems of laws.

4. The rejection of fixed laws in nature leads him further to deny "the unity of consciousness" which is the basis of the modern idealist's theory of moral life.

5. He declines to apply mathematics to physical states ; and in logic he sees little which enables one to understand reality. He fully, however, recognises that both in pure mathematics and logic there is room for insight, intuition, and imagination ; but since they are not the only universals, reality can only be ascertained when intuition freed from mathematical trammels is applied to the phenomena of life.

6. He rejects determinism, *physical* based on the principle of the conservation of energy, and *psychical* based on "association of ideas." He gives it no place, because the Life-force, *élan*

de vie, is indeterminate, free, and incalculable in its operations.

7. But that to which Bergson takes the most serious objection, and what, therefore, he chiefly discards, is the attempt to explain reality in the joint terms of time and space, quality and quantity.¹ He writes upon this subject with great fervour and with manifest conviction. Much, indeed, of what is distinctive in his teachings depends upon what he has to say respecting "a previous confusion of duration with extensity, of succession with simultaneity, of quality with quantity." He accordingly sets duration and space, quality and quantity in sharp opposition. Quality and not quantity is the key to reality. Space is "what enables us to distinguish a number of identical and simultaneous sensations from one another"² without reference to their quality.

It follows, therefore, that in attempting to *measure* psychical states we are only dealing with their extensive quantity, and not at all with their quality, which is the interpretation of reality.

The distinction which Bergson thus makes needs to be always kept well in view in reading his writings. He himself attaches the greatest

¹ *Vide* his Introduction to *Time and Free Will*.

² *Time and Free Will*, p. 95.

importance to it. One must fail to understand his contributions to the philosophy of life if it be forgotten or overlooked.

8. Bergson further refuses to take intelligence as a guide to reality. He declares for instinct and intuition not as opposed to intelligence, but as completing and transcending it. They are both nearer to life than intelligence. Reality cannot be attained by means of it. You cannot get beyond intelligence by means of intelligence.¹

According to Bergson intelligence is chiefly if not wholly engaged with ideas of things, ideas which come into existence with actions; but its limits are well defined. Consciousness is not confined to intelligence. Intelligence is only one function of the soul. Instinct and intuition go far beyond it; and intelligence is not in any valid sense that which interprets life. This limitation of intelligence is distinctive of Bergson's philosophy.

IV

From what has been stated it will be seen that Bergson is strong on the critical side. He has made it his business to correct the false premises of investigators, and also to get rid of what he holds to be their confusing conclusions.

¹ *Creative Evolution*, p. 202.

He discharges, it may be said, this double task with a fine persuasiveness and with a minimum of friction. He also carries his readers along with him from stage to stage of his inquiries, for he makes his positions quite clear. This, however, does not imply that at every step he secures their assent.

But Bergson is also strong on the constructive side; and his contributions to philosophy are of great value. For he offers a new metaphysics, and a theory of knowledge which have rightly commanded much attention. He also lays a basis for a moral theory of life; and some think that they see in his writings support for drastic economic methods, as, for instance, the adoption of Syndicalism.

As already stated, he refuses to accept all the sciences as mathematical. Kant limited himself to an interpretation of the sciences in terms of mathematics. He never, therefore, got beyond phenomena; never reached reality. But Bergson makes a bold attempt to get at reality by means of a new metaphysics and an intuitive method.

He insists that there are sciences, such as biology, psychology, and sociology, which are independent of mathematics. These deal with organisms and life. Biology and psychology reveal the beginnings of individuality and also a

small measure of freedom for the estimation of which mathematical concepts are entirely out of place, and useless; nay, if they be applied are confusing. But biology especially shows that there are degrees of individuality; and that as the scale of being is ascended, freedom becomes more and more pronounced. This is its record; and these are its results.

Now, Bergson argues if a theory of life, based on biology, be constructed you are no longer dependent upon mathematics and logic, upon reason and its postulates. A new metaphysics is a possibility. Reality can be explained in terms of life and experience; and that which provides the explanation is not mathematical calculations, but *intuition*.

But this same basis also supplies Bergson with a theory of knowledge. Nowhere else does he write more incisively than when he states and justifies his theory of knowledge. A theory, he says, which is dependent upon "the concepts which the understanding puts at its disposal"¹ is altogether inadequate and uncritical. There is, he maintains, no theory of knowledge which is separated from the theory of life; and here again intuition is the interpreting factor.

¹ *Creative Evolution*, p. xiii.

But he goes further, and implies a moral theory; for, as one reads Bergson's writings and tries to perceive the value of his teachings a legitimate criticism is suggested by his insistence on intuition. Why, one is justified in asking, does he not also apply it to moral actions?

v

Here, therefore, it will amply repay one to attempt to understand his position in relation to ethics and sociological questions. Everybody recognises the difficulty of classifying Bergson as a moralist. There are some who, with good reason on their side, place him among pragmatists. Professor James' preference for Bergson's writings is proof that his theory of the Life-force which originates all things, and his further contention that actions and experience must have a first place in the interpretation of life, make him appear to be a supporter of pragmatism. But Bergson himself does not definitely adopt pragmatism.

Bergson might perhaps be described by most people as an exponent of evolutionary ethics, but care would require to be taken as to the sense in which the term "evolutionary" is employed. It cannot be used with the connotation which hitherto has been associated with the term.

For Bergson gives to evolution a new content. It is the Life-force in constant change whose movements, because they are free, cannot be predicted. The Life-force adopts for its own use all that makes for its development. He describes in quite explicit terms his view of evolution when he says that "most of the philosophies of nature see in vegetative, instinctive, and rational life three successive degrees of the development of one and the same tendency, whereas they are three divergent directions of an activity that has split up as it grew.¹ He is, therefore, an evolutionist with a difference, and his pronouncement militates against evolutionary ethics, as that phrase is generally used.

Bergson's personal position is, however, really secondary to that which his theories prescribe for all who accept them; and here, therefore, the legitimate criticism to which I have referred may be offered. For all that he has taught, and all the contributions which he has made towards *reality*, lay emphasis at every step and stage upon intuition.

Now, if a new metaphysics and a theory of knowledge be legitimately deduced from Bergson's theory of life, it is difficult to perceive how he and those who accept his

¹ *Creative Evolution*, p. 142.

philosophy, which is deeply rooted in intuition, can be anything other than Intuitionists in morals. For if, as he holds, intuition be the key to reality, why not also of the moral life?

In these days when efforts are made to dethrone idealism, because reason no longer has the place formerly assigned to it; when utilitarianism is no longer seriously defended, though still practised in Church and State and in the market-place; and when pragmatism, the most recent of moral theories, is already set aside, because it cannot, as a philosophy, make good its claim to "a meaning," it would be indeed a great gain to intuitionists if they could count Bergson as among their number. But on purely moral theory he declines to declare himself.

His philosophy of life with its moral implications holds good, however, apart from his personal attitude to it; and if intuition be all that he claims for it, then, the older school of moralists, who ascribed everything to intuition, cannot be neglected. It would be strange indeed if that school found a new and powerful supporter in Bergson.

It may be said, by way of answer, that Bergson's insistence upon the high functions of intuition is not the same thing as finding the explanation of moral distinctions in innate

ideas and moral intuition. Granted ; but how are you to limit intuition ? How are you to prescribe its operations ? and are you at liberty to apply it in one sphere alone, and not in all departments of life ? If it be valid for the interpretation of reality, it must also be for morals and the moral life, which lie within the bosom of reality.

The explanation of the origin of intuition and innate moral ideas is the difficulty of Bergson and all who hold by Intuitionism. Whence does intuition arise ? What is its content ? Bergson would again make a big postulate, and say that it is in the Life-force, *élan de vie*. Intuitionists would reply that it is given as a fact in the constitution of man's nature.

Both thus make postulates. They also both attempt to verify them ; but their postulates are not one whit simpler than those which idealists make. Here, indeed, you are in the region of uncertainty ; and when Faith, in the name of religion, enters into it, and makes her claims, they are at once seen to be as reasonable as any that are made in the name of philosophy.

But this for the moment apart. Bergson, it should be said, supplies a basis for idealism as well as for intuition. He begins with unconscious instinct, and passes on to instinct

which is conscious. The former expresses itself in sympathetic action; the latter in *insight*. Instinct explains much of the animal life; intuition interprets all that belongs to human life; but intuition again passes into *vision*. All these belong to Life at its various stages.

It is a distinct gain to set out these stages plainly. Instinct alone cannot explain the actions of self-conscious man. It is nearer, however, Bergson maintains, to reality than intelligence; but that would place animals on a higher plane than man. Man, however, stands far higher, for he has intuition,¹ *æsthetic*, which enables him to apprehend the beautiful, and *moral*, which emphasises *values*. But intuition in its intensest form is *vision*; and *vision*, again, is that to which idealism assigns the highest functions, and by means of which it perceives the *end* as well as the conditions of self-realisation.

Bergson, as I have said, has not yet fully developed his philosophy of life; but its implications are quite plain. Hasty writers may attribute to him in the sphere of economics a defence of syndicalism, because he seems to teach that "a conscious minority" has the right to dominate a majority still unconscious

¹ *Creative Evolution*, p. 192.

of duties and privileges; but when the defenders of syndicalism turn to Bergson for support they should be careful to see where he himself stands, and what he actually teaches.

The truth is, his philosophy of life is still in the making; and all that can be claimed is that the principles for which he contends appear to justify pragmatism, intuitionism, and idealism. So far as I have been able to ascertain he has not yet made definite pronouncements upon the social problems which lie within the economic province. His theory of life may lead him into it. This is indeed almost certain; but it is unfair to ascribe to him opinions upon subjects with which he has not yet dealt.

I have examined Bergson's philosophy of life, because he occupies a prominent position among the great investigators of the day. My chief object has been to indicate whither his theory of life leads him, especially in relation to ethics. Like the early Greek philosophers who postulated water, air, fire, etc.,¹ as the original element of life, he too makes his postulate, and declares for warmth, heat, and inrush of life; and like theirs his postulate has its ethical implications.

For the purpose which I have in view it is

¹ See pp. 76-8.

enough to show that Bergson's interpretation of phenomena and reality justifies one in holding that this brilliant and original writer has already thrown light not directly, but indirectly, upon ethical theory and ethical issues.

There are, I believe, good grounds for maintaining that his philosophy of life will afford room for all that is true in utility, in intuition, and idealism; and that he is another of the increasing number of writers who insist that a synthesis of moral theories which would give to each its own place, and lead ultimately to a modified idealism, is the great need of to-day.

Bergson's conception of "the inrush of life," with its constant *change*, may seem to tell against "unity" both in the material and the moral spheres; but none the less, as experience and observation prove, there is a unity deeper than all differences; and a synthesis of the theories which claim to be able to explain the moral life is certainly the best agency of that unity. More and more this is becoming both manifest and imperative.

The contrast of Bergson's half-formed ethical theory with Christian ethics is like that between the dawn when objects are imperfectly seen, and the noon-day light which shows objects plainly.

CHAPTER X

THE CHURCH AND HER ETHICS

I

How Christian ethics may directly make for social betterment is the problem which all who espouse the ethics of the Christian Faith must endeavour to solve. It is especially the problem to the solution of which the Church must devote herself.

But many good Christian people hesitate to address themselves to the solution of this problem. At the back of their minds there is a lurking suspicion that the ethics of their Faith is too Utopian. They seem somehow to entertain the view that the Christian Faith does not enforce, but merely outlines, beautiful ideals—for admiration. They make, therefore, no attempt to realise these ideals. They do not treat them as belonging to the practical business of life.

Many outside the pale of the Church seeing this hesitation, and the lukewarmness of Christians, boldly affirm that, apart from Christianity

and its ethical teachings, moralists have discovered ethical values sufficient for the individual and society, and which, indeed, contain all that both require.

Some, as has been already seen, still more boldly declare that Christian ethics blocks the way of social betterment, and should be swept out of its path.

Now, there is no easy method of sifting and testing these contentions. A careful and patient reading of ethical history is essential. I have, therefore, attempted such a reading. History cannot be neglected.

Taking its teachings into account, one sees plainly the high place which history assigns to Christian ethics. It commends the ethical qualities which belong to Christianity. These stand out distinctly on its pages. The Christian Faith on its part, without theorising about these qualities, describes, illustrates, and enforces them. If they be brought into contrast with the content of any other ethics their large volume, their superiority, and their value for life become apparent.

This is not a mere assertion. It is the clear testimony of history, which is confirmed whenever an examination is made of the basis and character of ethical values. Experience, too, supports this testimony.

II

Given then Christian ethics with all its worth for life, is the Church to be satisfied with merely showing what value belongs to its ethics? or with setting up its ethics as something to be admired, but not used?

The Church and her mission would be altogether and entirely misunderstood if its ethics be not applied to the religious, social, political, national, and international life.

I have already adduced evidence in support of the three statements—(a) that Christian ethics is not a mere theory or speculation; (b) that it has its own *terminus ad quem*; and (c) that it finds its element in human life, using that term in its broadest sense.

But is not social betterment to-day too often attempted without its invaluable aid? Is it not by many earnest social reformers treated as a negligible quantity? Is it not sacrificed at the shrine of economics, which is counted all in all?

This treatment, it should be noted, has been meted out to it not only by those who do not, or cannot, accept the Christian Faith, but also by enormously large numbers of those who profess the Faith. The truth is, that the mightiest agency of social betterment has been left to lie unused, forgotten, neglected.

But why have the moral qualities—*love, righteousness, humility, self-sacrifice, and brotherliness*—been brought into the light? Why did Christ give them the chiefest place in all His teachings? Why has history put its *imprimatur* upon them, and extolled them as the greatest of all moral factors? and why have power and beauty been imparted to them?

The only answer which can be returned to these questions is, that these moral qualities are given for use; and that all who bear the Christian name should make it their special business to apply them to the individual and social life. They are not mere ornaments, but the mightiest moral agencies in the world.

The duty of Christians will be made quite plain if it be again recalled that the Church of Christ is entrusted with a great message of redemption, and therefore of hope for mankind. It is her mission to bring home to men's minds a conviction of sin; to lead the penitent to Christ; and to declare in His Name that all who believe in Him are saved, and have a place in His kingdom.

But it is equally her mission to use all means within her power to make her members honest, generous, forgiving, self-sacrificing, and lovers of justice, equity, and fair dealing as between man and man. When she has thus trained

them, and when they go about their daily work, with a high sense of honour and responsibility, society feels the influence which is exerted by them.

I do not dwell upon this sacred duty of the Church. It has always been discharged unless when she has been in a dead state, and entirely forgetful of her moral mission. It is, indeed, to the praise of the Church that she has stood for a pure, moral life; and it cannot be said that she has left the individual without guidance.

This is so manifest, and so universally acknowledged, that I trust I shall not be misunderstood if I do not repeat what the text-books teach respecting the moral life of the individual, or if I do not attempt to recall what homiletics and tens of thousands of sermons preached week after week inculcate with great insistence. The Church has, indeed, taught that the individual Christian must abound in personal goodness, and be to his fellow-men an example of the good and manly life.

If, however, the Church stops there, and nothing else be done, she does not carry out her full mission. Her members are then left without guidance in relation to the industrial questions of the day which perplex and baffle many. They are not directed either as to

what they should attempt towards social betterment, or the equipment which is necessary in order to do social work well and effectively.

They are thus left alone, while other agencies, often antichristian in character and aim, are adopted ; and those who accept them zealously pursue their own ideals. It deserves the most serious consideration that these agencies not infrequently enlist the services of Christian people, and give, not perhaps intentionally, but none the less really, a preponderating bias to their minds in favour of the *material* to the neglect of the *moral* and *spiritual*.

These things are happening every day ; and leaders of the Church, startled out of their indifference to social welfare, have too frequently nothing else to utter, save loud and often meaninglessly idle complaints. That is not how great leaders of the Church should meet the new situation of the day.

The ethics of their Faith must address itself to the social problem which lies before it ; and if the Church's leaders be wise, if they have a broad view of Christ's right to rule and reign in all departments of life, they will endeavour, first, to inform themselves as to the social problem which cries for a solution ; and, next, they will attempt to give guidance to the members of the Church, many of whom to-day

are eager for service, but do not know where and how to begin.

The true leaders of the Church will do these things in order that the ethics of their Faith may have an opportunity of proving its power to make an invaluable contribution towards the solution of the social problem.

I recall the fact that the Church has in times of crises entered into the political and industrial arena; but the occasions have been few when her leaders took their legitimate place.

She entered, for instance, into the political arena when slavery was the burning question of the hour; and, again, when atrocities were perpetrated in defenceless States, as in Bulgaria and Armenia. She entered into the industrial arena when strikes raged, as in the days of Dr. Chalmers, and she has more recently made her voice sometimes heard in those of the present time.

But all these were exceptional occasions. Feelings ran high, and the Church was rather driven into these arenas than of deliberate choice entering into them. Her interposition was in no sense systematic. It was haphazard, and sometimes from lack of knowledge, ill-judged.

Society is to-day passing through a slow evolution, the issue of which already is, that industrial questions, which deeply affect the

welfare of tens of thousands of the people, are demanding much, and receiving some attention from the Church. But she is responding slowly in her corporate capacity to the clamant cry for redress. Christian agencies, however, are actively engaged in the promotion of a healthy social life. Some, it is true, hesitate to encourage social work, lest, as they fear, she should go outside what they have determined to be her province. They shake their heads with great solemnity, and look askance when the social mission of the Church is named.

III

But notwithstanding their negative attitude, the Church, passing as she is to-day through a slow evolution, is awakening to the urgency of this special work. And she is being urged to this work by the fervent appeals of some statesmen who entreat her to create the atmosphere which will make social legislation possible. Witness the fervent appeals which Mr. Lloyd-George has recently made.

The *Pan - Anglican Conferences*, which, however, do not carry with them ecclesiastical authority, have discussed with great frankness social questions. *The Christian Social Union*, *The Union of Social Service*, and *The Church Socialist League* have rendered excellent service,

but again these are outside the ecclesiastical organisation. The Nonconformist Churches of England have, under the same conditions, their Homes for the destitute, and are doing useful work.

The Church of Scotland has her numerous social Institutions, but these are established with the full sanction of her highest ecclesiastical Court. The United Free Church of Scotland also carries on her social work with the authority of her General Assembly. Witness the courageous attempt which she made to deal with social questions at a Congress held in Edinburgh and a Labour Week in Glasgow in the autumn of 1911 under the sanction of that Court.

These two Churches stand alone among all the others as those which with the authority of their highest ecclesiastical Courts are attempting social work. These Churches, as such, are therefore applying themselves to a task which all ecclesiastical organisations should undertake. It is the special honour of the United Free Church that she alone of all the Reformed Churches has through her General Assembly addressed her faithful people on the social questions of the day.¹

But when all these things are said, and due

¹ See her Pastoral Letter, issued 28th May 1909.

weight is given to them, there yet remains much to be done. The unbrotherly competition of the day, hurtful and demoralising to those who engage in it as well as to those who suffer at their hands; the unjust laws respecting land, framed when the legislators were returned to Parliament by pocket-boroughs, which still stand on the Statute Book, call for an application of the high ethics of the Christian Faith.

Again, the loud and wailing cry of the poor; the wretched homes, if they can be termed homes, in which they live; the temptations to vice to which they are exposed, the sufferings which they are obliged to bear, and the harsh conditions under which they eke out a livelihood are at once an appeal and a challenge to the Church. She dare not turn a deaf ear to these and yet claim that she is even attempting to discharge her whole mission.

The Church is, however, slow to move. She is, I do not say dominated, but she is certainly powerfully influenced by the rich; and these often resist social changes under the pretence that the spiritual work of the Church will suffer, but really under the dread of any change in the social order which suits them well.

Society is, nevertheless, passing through a

social evolution at a slow pace. The Church also is moving, and therein lies hope. Patience is needed. Patience may, however, be insisted upon too much; for systematic constructive work on behalf of the suffering poor is as loudly called for as is patience.

It is now dawning on the minds of many that poverty is a disease which demands scientific treatment. Indiscriminate and lavish doles of charity are now also seen to be, in many instances, positively hurtful. Men and women who undertake the relief of poverty must be trained. All that ethics and economics teach must be ascertained by them and used as aids to their work. Their efforts in order to be successful must be wisely directed.

In this new work the Church should take her part. Economics waits to be Christianised, and it is manifestly the duty of the Church to attempt this needful task. This new work is providing for Christian ethics a rare opportunity. It is indeed giving the ethics of the Christian Faith a chance of proving its vitality, wisdom, and worth.

The opportunity lies in this, that whenever schools of social science deal with poverty the causes of poverty must be investigated; but no sooner are the causes examined than Christian ethics at once has its chance. Here

it may be affirmed that were the Church to do justice to the most elementary imperatives of its ethics poverty would to a large extent be removed.

IV

Take, for instance, the elementary imperative of Christian ethics, that no man has the right to use another man, or his services, as a means of personal advantage. The implications of this imperative are of the most startling kind. If obedience were rendered to it the entire basis upon which business is to-day conducted would be radically changed. For, is not personal advantage the motive and aim of the greater part of business? But this is forbidden by Christian ethics.

One may hold up one's hand, and in alarm exclaim that were this imperative obeyed, business would soon be at a standstill. Rob it, one in a more reasonable mood may urge, of the motive of personal gain and you take from it that which makes business successful. "Successful?" Is it a success, that is worthy of the name, to take another man's service, and use it as you like, as if it were your own? Are you not doing *him* an injustice? And, if injustice be done, no matter how great is the amount of personal advantage, business which rests upon such a basis is indefensible. Reason

as you may, appeal to precedent, to what has always been the rule in business ; do this as much as you choose, yet you cannot explain away the elementary imperative of Christian ethics which enjoins that no man has a right to use another man, or his services, for personal advantage.

It will, I know, be said that in the conduct of business even on this forbidden basis all who are employed are also benefited. But are they? Do they receive the full reward of their labour? It is not a question as to their getting some benefit, which may be allowed ; but it is one as to whether they are receiving all the remuneration to which they are entitled. If a man has only in view his own personal advantage, though he may to a limited extent benefit others, his action cannot be justified by Christian ethical standards.

The old and now generally discarded utilitarian philosophy was once defended upon this very ground. It was argued that when an individual sought his own pleasure, he at the same time afforded a certain amount of pleasure to others. But this fallacious argument cannot hold, because it justifies self-seeking, and further because it sanctions over-reaching and the withholding from "the others" what is their due.

Christian ethics reverses this whole order. It says, seek the good of others and you thereby find your own. Philosophy applauds this higher rule of life. Poets of insight sing its praises, and, equally significant, experience is daily showing that it is the better way.

For, what is the justification for Government taking over into its own hands public services like the Post Office and Education? And why is there a widespread demand for the municipalisation of industries which may be used for the common good? Is it not because governmental and municipal control makes for the benefit of the many, and not for the advantage of the few? Criticism of such control may be abundant, and sometimes it may be needful; for States and Municipalities, like individuals, cannot altogether avoid making miscalculations and mistakes; but, like individuals, they may also learn from experience. Traced, therefore, to its roots, public control is justifiable in the opinion of an ever-increasing number, because it prevents a man, or a set of men, from seeking only personal advantage.

This much, then, is plain, that Christian ethics can point to experience as well as appeal to the value of its own imperatives when it forbids self-seeking even in the wide field of business transactions. It aims at the good of

all, and shows the way by which their good can be attained.

In pointing out the inviting field within which Christian ethics can operate, and has now its opportunity of operating, I have referred only to one of its imperatives. There are many others. Love, for instance, makes her high behests within the social province, and claims the right to reign and rule.

But this is denied in practice. Imagine the surprise which is expressed when it is claimed that love, the source of generosity and generous treatment, should rule when money-making is the issue at stake. With a touch of scorn, or perhaps in tones of pity for the deluded believers in the highest of all the Christian virtues, it is said with absolute assurance, that love has no place in the market. Its operations are impossible, and it is forthwith banished.

Well, deny that love does not here operate ; cut it out of the list of Christian virtues ; be done with it, and then and then only are you justified in saying that love has no place in money-getting, and that this prime moral quality should not tell in commerce. There is no other alternative. There is no middle course between these issues to pursue. You must make your choice as to which you prefer, and accept the consequences.

I shall only add that if to the man who bends all his energies towards money-making it be unthinkable that love should govern him, it is equally unthinkable to the man who has pondered over and taken in the full meaning of our Lord's teachings respecting the rule and reign of love in the social, as well as in the individual life, that love can be cast out, and denied its sovereign claims in the marketplace. The Church of Christ counts her Master's teachings concerning love as her most invaluable possessions. Whatever changes in the conduct of business may be entailed she is bound to insist upon them. Otherwise professions of devotion to Him are an empty name.

Again righteousness, as Christ illustrated it by His own actions, and enforced it by some of His loftiest utterances—righteousness which is far more than mere legal dealing—must also rule and reign in the social life. So, too, must self-sacrifice hold sway and be a determining factor in all pursuits.

Conflicts, difficulties apparently insurmountable, and baffling problems may ensue. But Christ's teachings respecting these moral qualities as essential must be accepted by the Church; and at all costs she must insist upon her own ethics. If she be faithful her way

will be made plain. She must walk by faith ; and here faith is put to the severest tests.

Society waits for the Church to do her duty. It is not enough for her to rely upon her ministers doing their duty. She herself in her corporate capacity must address her faithful members, and interpret her high ethics to them. Her ecclesiastical courts have to deal with organisations and agencies. But within recent years she is being urged to give more attention to questions touching the daily life of her people ; and at the present time there are thousands who look to her for guidance in relation to social problems. It is at once her duty and privilege to address them directly, and to give them the direction which they need and ask.

CHAPTER XI

CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND COMMERCIAL LIFE

I

IN the preceding chapter I had chiefly in view the Church and her responsibility to give effect to her high ethics.

The questions, however, which arise when consideration is given to the Church's social mission, trench so directly upon commercial life that I shall now attempt a more detailed treatment of Christian ethics in its relation to industrial labour, and commercial transactions.

In this wide province Christian ethics tells. Some may, and indeed many practically do, deny its powerful influence and legitimate rights.

But the Christian Faith with its lofty ethics enters into every department of human life. The doors of some departments may be bolted and barred against it; but it knocks loudly at all, and claims the right of entrance, and that because it knows itself as fitted and designed to give needful assistance and wise direction.

How very wide the industrial province is, may be at once ascertained if one recalls the amount of time which is devoted to industry. It is not necessary, in order to see the vastness of this province, to advert to the multiplicity of business transactions, or the ramifications of trade, or the international character and, therefore, far-reaching influence which now in an intense form belongs to commerce. The time spent in industry is sufficient to show how wide is the industrial province.

The hours of labour of the great majority of working people are ten each day. If some have less, there are many who have more. I know men who are awake soon after the clock strikes five o'clock in the morning. After hasty preparation they are off to their work, which they begin at six o'clock. They labour through the long day, and often on till the hour of eight or nine o'clock in the evening.

Time for attention to home duties, social obligations—and many of them are members of societies where they render good service—and sleep, they have in each twenty-four hours ten or ten and a half at their disposal. Time for recreation and mental improvement they have scarcely any. They are almost reduced to machines; they are counted as mere “hands”; and it is little wonder if their lives are some-

times drab coloured, and charged with a divine discontent.

Nor, recognising the conditions under which they pass day after day, is it at all surprising, if they be tempted to seize a moment's respite, that they sometimes idle away their time. One often hears complaints of the laziness of working men, and of their want of fidelity. The charge is false as made against the overwhelming majority of the working classes; but if some are eye-servants, it should not be forgotten that the fault is not entirely their own, but is largely due to the harsh rate at which they are driven, and the unreasonable conditions under which many of them are obliged to do their work. I do not in anywise excuse the idler. I only indicate how he is often made.

I shall show in a moment how Christian ethics speaks to workmen, and bids them count all tasks sacred duties; but meanwhile I point out how very wide is the industrial province. Masters, like working men, labour also through long and weary hours. From morning till evening they must be intent upon their business, and alert as to the state of the market. They spend hour upon hour of anxious thought in developing new methods of labour, or in trying to discover new customers for their produce. If some masters have much

time at their disposal they are the fortunate ones; for, the great majority have to toil early and late.

II

Now, since commercial life occupies so large a part of the time of masters and workmen; since the greatest portion of each day is, indeed, devoted to labour of one kind or another, this long period in each man's daily life cannot be untouched and unaffected by ethics.

It is wholly unreasonable to assume that especially Christian ethics has nothing by way of help, or counsel, to offer during the greater part of the daily life of men and women. It cannot be limited to the one or two hours each day free from active toil, or to the Day of Rest, once each week, which the wise rightly employ in public worship, and in thoughtful reflection upon the highest of all things. No; it must also tell during the long, weary day of toil; and, therefore, the question here arises, How can it, and in what direction does it influence workmen and masters?

I attempt an answer to this question, first, by saying that Christian ethics teaches and requires that workmen during all the hours of their labour must be *honest, reliable, and faithful*. It writes out in large capitals these

significant words, and bids workmen aim at being all that these terms connote. Every task which they undertake must be stamped with fidelity.

The conditions of labour may not be all that they might like, or desire, or legitimately claim; but having accepted work under them, workmen are bound, not merely by legal enactment, but by moral obligations, to do the utmost that lies within their power. They must be faithful. That is demanded from them.

But this is not an arbitrary demand. It is based upon the moral order of human life. All legitimate work, for instance, has a sacred character.

This may seem a big postulate, but not if the operations of moral law be observed. For how does it uniformly operate? Is it not that the humblest legitimate work if faithfully discharged carries with it development of character? Such is, indeed, always its reflex influence.

On the other hand, if work be done grudgingly, imperfectly, unfaithfully, moral deterioration of the workman inevitably accompanies work so performed. That is a law of the moral world as uniform in its operations as is any law of Nature.

There is, therefore, nothing arbitrary in the demand for fidelity and honesty in all labour.

But service, when looked at in the light of Christian ethics, assumes even a still more sacred aspect. Christian ethics gives to labour a new element and atmosphere; new motives also inspire it; and new ideals elevate it.

Christian ethics strictly forbids dishonest service. It declares the man who scamps his work an unfaithful servant. It shows how the man who shirks duty suffers moral loss. Christian ethics does more, however, than merely point out the issues of idling away one's time. It gives positive direction. Twice St. Paul uses the phrase when speaking of obedience to masters, "Not with eye-service as men-pleasers."¹

But he lifts the whole question of service into a new atmosphere when he, in the one instance, insists that Christian men are to work not as "men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart"; and, in the other, when he says that servants must render service not as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. "And whatever ye do," he adds, "do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."

¹ Eph. v. 6 and Col. iii. 22.

Here the motive to service is new. The atmosphere is religious in the truest sense of that term, and breathing this pure air the Christian workman realises that all legitimate work is sacred, and can be an agency of the highest religious life ; for,

“The trivial round, the common task
Will furnish all we ought to ask—
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God.”

The sacredness of work, and the grounds upon which it rests, are further clearly indicated when St. Paul enjoins faithful service, “Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity, *that ye may adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour, in all things*” ; and obedience, he also teaches, is to be rendered “not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.”

Too great prominence cannot be given to Christian ethics as it bears on work. The duty of servants to masters, the moral gain to workmen, and the honour done to the Christian life, and by means of it to God, are all singled out for attention and commendation. These things constitute a new element in service ; and obedience issues in benefits of which one, who does his work under their inspiring influence, can never be bereft. This is the Christian ideal of work.

III

But it must not be inferred that working men are forbidden to seek new, and better, conditions under which their work may be done. "The labourer is worthy of his reward." He is also entitled to demand right conditions, and fair remuneration.

This twofold demand is heard on all sides to-day. The social unrest witnesses to it. Loudly expressed and insistent it claims and receives attention.

One of the most notable signs of the times is seen in this, that not only socialistic papers, but also many religious *journals*, conducted with eminent ability, are now claiming a living wage on behalf of working men. These *journals* seldom go much in advance of their readers when dealing with social questions. Hence their popularity, for most people like to see their own opinions well stated. It flatters them to present them with reflections of their own judgments. These *journals* are not in the van of social progress. Their ethico-economic articles are neither numerous nor specially well-informed.

But now the volume of public opinion in favour of a living wage gives them their opportunity; and it is to their credit that they

have seized and used it. This, I repeat, is a sign of the times.

Wage-earning is, indeed, to-day on its trial ; and Christian ethics cannot be indifferent to the conflict which is going on.

The old and cordial relationships between masters and servants are breaking up. Business is passing increasingly into great Trusts. The managers of these Trusts are dividend-makers, and little else. Workmen are driven by them into positions of antagonism ; and the conflict is daily growing more and more intense.

Wage-earning under the present conditions cannot be the final state of industry. But workmen and masters often fight blindly. They see clearly neither the moral, nor the economic aspects of the industrial question ; and how it will issue they cannot, therefore, even guess.

History should be their instructor ; for industry has in the past gone slowly through well-marked stages. *Slavery*, *Serfdom*, and the *Guild Life* describe these stages. History makes it plain beyond all doubt that while industry was passing through each of these separate stages, not even the clearest-sighted of its leaders was able to predict what would be the next stage. The very uncertainty which now perplexes the earnest social reformer also

attended every forward step of the leaders of past days.

Changes were, however, slowly made; and, in addition to economic factors, Christian ethics played an important part in the industrial evolution. Its influence was always powerful, and made for industrial conditions of an increasingly better type; and now wage-earning reigns. But it is not final. In its present form, with its "market price of labour" as its chief note, it cannot be the highest and best.

Now, try to ascertain if wage-earning can be placed upon a more equitable basis, and if a higher and better stage can be reached. This is not an easy task, and the last thing which any one undertaking it should attempt is dogmatic utterances.

The master's point of view must be first examined. He contends, and quite rightly, that his situation and its difficulties should be intelligently and sympathetically considered. These are some of its chief features—

1. He has to keep his business in operation in dull as well as in prosperous times. He would perhaps be the first to admit that this is not entirely humanitarian action; for he cannot dismiss his men, and at the same time be ready to accept and execute a contract hurriedly offered to him. But while that

important consideration weighs with him, in many instances works are kept in operation at a great loss to the master, and advantage to workmen.

2. He is obliged to accept many contracts under time-limits. If the time of delivery of goods be not kept, heavy fines are imposed. The risks of strikes are great. In the ceaseless conflict workmen seize the moment for a strike which will most embarrass masters. They then press their claims; but contracts must be executed, otherwise great loss may be entailed. This and other consequences the master must always take into his calculations.

3. The cost of raw material, and that of production, must also be carefully estimated. This the master alone can do. Knowledge of the market, foresight, and watchfulness are all entailed. Remissness in any department may spell loss. Workmen may be deprived of employment, and masters of their business. This in outline is the situation of the master. His responsibilities and anxieties are obvious.

Manifestly this is a situation with which one who presses for the application of Christian ethics to business cannot interfere. He is out of his province when he deals with the details of business. The Christian moralist will grant that there is truth in this contention.

But is he excluded from dealing with the labour problem? Is there nothing which he may legitimately press? Has he no light to throw upon this situation? Examine this whole question from another point of view, and it will be equally manifest that Christian ethics should be made to apply to the labour problem.

Thus, many masters make large fortunes. Syndicates, like "The Coats Limited Company," count their "profits" by millions. Now, either the community which buys their *goods* pays too much for them, or the workers do not have a share of the surplus value of labour. To exact from consumers prices which yield thousands, or, as in the case cited, millions of profits is wrong. To gather in these profits and keep them while the workers are only receiving a bare subsistence is also wrong. Both of these things may happen; or one may and the other not; but both often do take place.

Has Christian ethics nothing to say here? I am persuaded that it has much which those to whom is assigned the duty of enforcing its imperatives should state plainly, and urge strongly.

Examine the master's situation again. He is entitled to remuneration for his personal service, his knowledge of business, his foresight and diligence. He is also justified in

making a charge for the capital which he invests ; and he is likewise warranted in laying aside a certain amount of his profits to cover all possible risks.

He himself, too, must be the judge as to what is due for his personal services, his capital, and the risks which he incurs. But here he must apply a reasonable standard, say, that which he applies to the best paid of his work-people. He cannot, for instance, judge his personal services worth thousands a year and pay workmen a wage upon which they can scarcely live. But on this question he must be the judge, his conscience enlightened by the highest ethics being his guide.

There are many Christian men engaged in business who could not refuse to acknowledge that thus they should judge, but yet they gather in enormous profits. They are wholly guided by the ethics of the market-place, and not by the ethics of their Faith.

But here Christian ethics should be made to apply. Its standard is high and exacting ; but either it should be a working guide, or one should imitate the courage of Nietzsche, and set it aside altogether as wholly invalid.

Christian men will not, however, accept the latter alternative ; for that would carry with it the abandonment of the great hopes which they

cherish as to salvation. But let it be remembered that the ethics of the Christian Faith is inseparably connected with all that is redemptive in Christianity.

If, then, they will not, the other alternative must be accepted. Nothing else can be offered. Nothing else is possible. Now, if once seriously, and on a wide scale, the other alternative were adopted, masters after rewarding themselves for their personal service, their capital, and after covering their risks, would pay their work-people according to the services which they rendered. This service is easily estimated by "the profits" which are made. Masters would do this, without regard to "the market price of labour," which is now the only standard acknowledged.

IV

This is the other side of the situation ; and Christian moralists are justified, nay, they are obliged, to urge these considerations upon the attention of employers of labour.

The labour problem can never be satisfactorily solved by force. Workmen may resort to strikes, and under compulsion their demands may be partially conceded. But the strike is a dangerous agency, and experience proves that it is often disastrous to workmen and masters.

The time has come when another method should be tried; and if Christian ethics be really accepted as valid its imperatives should be applied to business transactions.

Without question wage-earning, if Christian ethics be allowed to exercise its legitimate influence, can be placed upon a more equitable basis.

But even when this has been effected the final stage would not yet be reached. For the profits of labour may be distributed on an entirely different principle. The large Trusts which are now in existence, and the great enterprises which municipalities carry on give, at least, suggestions that the time is coming when a distribution of profits may be made with a measure of equality to all who labour, each being rewarded according to the service which he renders.

This may still seem to many far too Utopian; but Utopias in the field of labour apparently as impossible of attainment have been realised. Slavery gave place to feudalism, and that again to wage-earning. A higher stage cannot therefore be beyond reach. The ruthless competition of the day, and the hard conditions under which millions toil and live are not final. A better state is possible. That is the judgment of the well-informed, and the morally élite of men.

But how it will be accomplished is at the present time perhaps beyond the wit of men to say. This, however, does not imply that the many earnest social reformers who are labouring at this problem will spend their efforts in vain. Industrial changes are effected gradually. Time and experience are great solvents; and where there are powerful factors in operation—such, for instance, as those created by the conscious unfairness in the present system, and the inequalities to which it leads—a higher and better stage is certain to be reached.

Already an appeal to economic history and teachings has done something to solve the problems of the market-place. It will do so again. All, indeed, who rightly understand economic science read its history and direct attention to the operation of its principles with a practical object in view. Their aim is to throw light upon the problems, first, how money is made; next, how it is distributed and how it is spent.

In the writings of Thomas Chalmers, John Ruskin, and Professor Marshall this threefold object is steadily and successfully kept in view. Almost all well-informed economists now follow their example. The expression of economic problems in terms of mathematical formulæ no longer satisfies them. They endeavour to justify their science by making it serve a useful end.

Well: if economists accomplish this end, Christian ethics can be made equally serviceable. It may be even more usefully employed. For it is the greatest moral force in human life. It is also the purest and highest.

Evidence has already been given of its purifying and lofty character. I do not, therefore, require to repeat what has already been said. But by these considerations I lay greater emphasis upon the Church's duty. She is entrusted with the task of applying her high ethics. She must show where its imperatives legitimately operate; and with all the authority which rightly belongs to her she must enforce these imperatives. She cannot neglect this duty with impunity.

A great opportunity is at the present time within her reach. Many, oppressed with the gravity of the problems of the day, look to her for direction. She is not called upon to use, or countenance, force; but the gracious influence of her ethics can tell effectively upon the problems of the market-place, as well as upon those of the home or individual life.

Until she brings this influence to bear upon these problems the struggle with its bitter fruits will go on, and the problems will remain unsolved.

CHAPTER XII

CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND ECONOMICS

I

COMPLAINT is sometimes, and not unjustly, made that ethical investigation is treated as an end in itself. It does not serve, it is said, a practical purpose. It is not sufficiently brought into touch with daily life.

Now, it must be allowed that if ethics be made a mere abstract study, interesting perhaps to the historical student, but nothing more, then would this complaint be justified. But ethics cannot be separated from the individual or social life.

Christian ethics is certainly directed towards the highest practical ends. It emphasises personal responsibility. It penetrates one with a sense of one's obligations. It treats man not as a machine, but as a moral being. It also deals with men in their collective capacity. It regards them as capable of seeing and applying its principles to the problems of daily life. It contemplates, indeed, a new social order, and urges its realisation.

But here the question at once arises, Is ethics entitled to enter into the wide and inviting field of economics? Has it any right to be within that field, urging its imperatives, and pressing its claims? Whatever answer others may give to this question, the person who believes in the validity and value of Christian ethics must reply: "Yes; it has a right to enter; and more than that, its entrance is urgently required."

Examine this reply for a moment. There was a time, not very long ago, when economists imperiously bade away all moralists from their province. I have shown in my *Chalmers' Lectures*¹ that Dr. Thomas Chalmers, equally well informed as a moralist and economist, boldly entered, despite the loud protests of the economists of his day, into the economic province; and that he took with him all his Christian principles, and made a splendid effort to apply them to economic problems. His contemporaries for the most part regarded him as a mere enthusiast.

Few understood how thoroughly he had grasped the principles of economic science; and only now, after a long lapse of time, are his services being recognised. Dr. Chalmers

¹ "The Social Ideal and Dr. Chalmers' Contribution to Christian Ethics."

was a great Churchman, but his strong preferences were not for ecclesiastical courts. Force of circumstances made him a Church leader; by choice he was an economist, and a Christian economist.

I make this reference to Dr. Chalmers, because he was among the first to recognise that ethics had a right to enter the economic field, and that there it was, as it is to-day, greatly needed.

As I have already indicated, he has been followed by John Ruskin, and still later, by Professor Marshall, who says of economics that it is "a study of man's actions in the ordinary business of life," and that it takes account of "man's character and efficiency" as products of "the circumstances under which he has lived."¹

It is a notable fact that economists to-day are being obliged to open to ethics the gates which lead into their field. This is done somewhat hesitatingly, and the gates do not stand very wide; but they are opening wider and wider every day, and that chiefly because many of the questions which economists discuss have ethical roots, and ethical flower and fruit of which account must be taken.

¹ *Principles of Economics*, p. 64.

II

But philosophy proves to demonstration that ethics cannot rightfully be excluded from economics. Your ethics, for instance, tells upon and indeed gives character and direction to your economics. What your ethics is, your economics will be.

If, say, you take *pleasure*, hedonism, or *happiness*, eudæmonism, as your ethical *end*, your economics will reflect it. You will become severely individualistic. That is inevitable. You will, therefore, further attempt to justify personal gain, and the pursuit of objects, which yield the maximum of pleasure, and entail least resistance.

This, however, leads to such a poor and unsatisfactory life that many endeavours have been made to hold by utilitarian ethics, and also to get rid of selfishness, which nobody cares to attempt to justify even in economics, but all have been in vain. Personal gain, pleasure, or happiness is not, and cannot be, a worthy *end*.

Bentham, Mill, and Sidgwick have all tried to read benevolence into hedonism. They have failed. They have, however, arbitrarily introduced benevolence into their ethics. Its urgent need in life being recognised by them,

they therefore have argued in favour of it. But this has been done illogically so far. Though benevolence always issues in good results, you cannot make the results of benevolent conduct also its basis.

But the impossibility of excluding ethics from economics is also seen if you take as your ethical end, "the good of all," as that through which personal life can only be realised.

Intuitionists claim this as their end, but their claim cannot be easily allowed; for, in intuitionism it is always the individual conscience which is emphasised, and this leads to individualism in economics. The right of private judgment, for instance, in itself quite legitimate, when unduly pressed has in the religious life led to the formation of *sectaries*, who have wrought untold harm. The same right has, when urged in the economic province, led to every man doing what he likes, without respect either to the interests or welfare of others.

No one can justify such action. History's pages tell of the evil which it has done; and the bitter experience of to-day, the outcome of heartless competition and the cruel exploitation of the defenceless, writes its condemnation.

Ethics, purer in motive and loftier in aim than that dictated by either *happiness* or *pleasure*, is a necessity. Moral life cannot be fully

explained by either of these terms. Even *duty for duty's sake*, one of the "notes" of intuitionism, is not sufficient.

Something higher and better is demanded. This is found in idealistic ethics; but it has been slowly discovered. The old Greeks adumbrated the moral ideal by their inductions from the perfect order and harmony of nature.¹ Plato, and after him the Stoics, still more clearly defined it.² Modern idealists by their appeal to universal reason³ have made it more and more manifest.

But more distinctly than all these together Christian ethics describes the true moral ideal. It teaches plainly that, no man lives unto himself, but unto God; and that, service to God is rendered when man seeks the well-being of his neighbour.

Twice St. Paul emphatically affirms that the end of life is to live to God.⁴ This is also taught by our Lord. It runs indeed through all His teachings; but He shows in unmistakable language what living unto God means; for, in His description of the last judgment He takes the kindly deeds done to the hungry, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the imprisoned, as done unto Himself, saying,

¹ *Ante*, pp. 76-7.

² *Ante*, pp. 84-8.

³ *Ante*, pp. 97-8.

⁴ Rom. xiv. 6-8 and 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

This is the great Christian moral ideal. This is the true end of life, in pursuing after which man realises his personal life. It cannot be set out too prominently, nor can it be insisted upon too much. It is that which is most distinctive in Christian ethics.

Can, then, this moral ideal have a place, and its own place too, in economics? To ask this question is to startle men of business, if indeed ethical principles as applied to commerce can astonish them, so engrossed are they in the mere making of money.

If you take this moral ideal with you into the economic province the economist at once warns you off the field, and says, either in anger, or with a touch of pity in his words, "The moral ideal does not apply to economics."

But here it should be said that in addition to Chalmers, Ruskin, and Marshall many ethico-economic writers¹ of the day fully recognise the direct bearing of ethics upon economics. The recognition is, however, still far from general; and therefore the question needs to be argued.

Now, reflect for a moment what the *dictum* that "the moral ideal does not apply" means.

¹ *Vide* Dr. Bonar's *Philosophy and Political Economy*, p. 218.

It plainly implies that Christian ethics has no right to urge its great ideal when and where economic problems are under consideration. That ideal has no place in the economic province, and must be severely excluded.

When the question is stated in this simple form perhaps the first exclamation of Christian people is, "Surely there is some mistake here! Christian truths not apply in any department of human life? The exclusion is impossible." But when their surprise gives place to reflection, and the facts of life are examined, it is soon discovered that this, and no other, is the conclusion of almost all past and many present-day economists.

The claim of economists is twofold: first—that their science deals with an exclusive subject—the *general causes which make for wealth*; and next, that "with regard to the wealth of mankind and of nations the generalisations" of the science "are universally true."¹ But the human factor, and therefore ethics, is one of these causes; and as to what is *true*, everything depends upon what are the generalisations made. The only thing which holds good is, that all wealth comes from *land* and *labour*. Some add to this *capital*. Capital, however,

¹ See Introduction to Edwin Canan's *Elementary Political Economy*.

comes from land and labour. It is one of their products.

III

This twofold claim therefore needs to be closely examined, and that too with the specific object in view of ascertaining whether ethics can be excluded.

Now Dr. Bonar, one of the most recent and also one of the ablest of writers on economics, admits that in dealing with the science national character and personal talents must be taken into account ; but he adds, "These elements are only treated by it in their relation to the external elements." ¹ Exactly : this is all that one who understands ethics and economics will ask. It is, indeed, the relation of the human to the material that is in question.

Grant, then, that a relationship exists, and since man cannot divest himself of moral responsibility even when dealing with wealth, it follows that ethics has its own, and its rightful place, in the solution of economic problems. This is admitted by Dr. Bonar to the fullest extent ; for, he says that "the 'economic man' for good or for evil, is the man living with his fellow-men," and that the science "is nothing if not social." ²

It has, of course, its own abstraction, which

¹ *Elements of Political Economy*, p. 2.

² *Ibid.* p. 5.

is, *the consideration of society only in relation to its wealth*; but if the science be widened, as recently it has been so extended as to include "an equal or unequal sharing" of the nation's material resources "among the citizens,"¹ the old exclusive, and hampering spirit, cherished by doctrinaire economists, is no longer possible.

Ethical principles must be allowed to operate; and when the highest of these is permitted free-play questions as to equal or unequal sharing of the nation's wealth will be more easily and more satisfactorily settled. For if, as I have shown, no one, who accepts the moral teachings of the Christian Faith as his guide, can use his neighbour's time and energies chiefly for his own personal gain, an equitable distribution of wealth is the natural outcome of the application of this moral principle. It may be said that business is not at present conducted on this principle, and that society is still far from adopting it; but this condition of things only proves that economics waits to be moralised.

There is indeed nothing more urgently required at the present time than the moralisation of economics. Social unrest is deep and clamant; and that because, without regard to the rightful claims of the labourer, gains are gathered into relatively few hands. No

¹ *Elements of Political Economy*, p. 2.

thought or consideration, other than that of self-interest, receives attention; and society is burdened with a thousand economic evils which cry for redress, but are denied it.

It is not, however, only in relation to the question of the distribution of wealth that ethics claims a right to be heard. I have selected this instance, but others lie to hand whenever the generalisations of economic science are examined. These generalisations are held to be universally true.

But, as I have already said, everything depends upon the generalisations which are made. It is comparatively easy to state, after the example of certain economists, axioms as to labour being determined by what is desired on the part of man, and what makes for his comfort. Axioms can also be formulated as to the fruits of labour being increased by knowledge, improved machinery savings, co-operation, and the like agencies.

These things do not carry one very far. They throw light upon the science itself, and show what operations have certain results. Something more, however, is required.

The human factor must be taken into account. Character and talents must receive attention. Whenever this is done, one is at once in the realm of ethics. Its dictates must

be obeyed; for if these be disregarded, no matter how great may be the accumulation of material wealth, well-being, and the satisfaction of the deepest desires, cannot be realised.

A healthy state of society cannot therefore be attained; and all this proves that ethics must be permitted to exercise its legitimate influence. Its exclusion from economics spells loss. Dr. Barbour is, beyond all controversy, right when he says that economics, uncorrected by an idealistic philosophy, neglects the individual.¹ It may be added that its "law of averages" no more does justice to all the varieties of *collective* life than Aristotle's theory of the *Mean* does to ethics. A synthesis of all the elements which make for welfare and well-being must be attempted. In this synthesis Christian ethics must have a prominent place. Without its invaluable aid economics will lapse into the dry-as-dust order.

IV

I am not here attempting a treatise on economics. I am only taking its more outstanding features, and examining them in order to ascertain if economics can stand alone, and be a strict preserve into which moralists dare not enter.

Now, economics has many ramifications. It

¹ *A Philosophic Study of Christian Ethics*, pp. 71, 396-7.

is customary to treat it as dealing with the production, exchange, and distribution of goods.

Land, labour, and capital are taken as the agencies which make for production.

Exchange takes place by means of certain media, gold, or cheques, bills of exchange, and other credit facilities. It is also dependent upon the state of the market abroad as well as at home.

Distribution again is generally represented as effected through rent, wages, and profits. To these must be added, co-operation, the influence of Acts of Parliament, and taxation.

But when all, or any one of these, is examined, the conviction is soon produced in one's mind that, since at every step and stage of the various processes the human element is in active exercise; and since it cannot be in play apart from ethics, prominence must be given to character and to the use which is made by each man of his endowments and his opportunities.

1. Land, to which labour is applied, yields wealth. But whenever this statement is closely examined, ethical questions at once arise as to how land has come into the possession of certain persons. It will be replied that many have purchased it, and that others who hold it have so long been in possession of it that lapse of time gives them a title to it.

Can any one believe that this is the final word upon land-holding? If it were, then, Parliament would be manifestly at fault when legislation is passed which limits the landholders' powers, or takes from them in the form of taxation sums of money. The demand that it should be indefinitely taxed and be made to bear burdens now imposed on industry would be also baseless.

But since land is the original source of wealth, and cannot be increased like commodities; and since further it can be not unjustly contended that land should never have been alienated, many moderate land reformers maintain that it should bear far heavier burdens than are now imposed upon it. Man needs it. He has also a right to it.

Let, therefore, economists say what they like, the ethical question will again and again be raised as to how it came to be possessed by certain persons to the exclusion of all other members of the State; and fast following this question will be heard the further ethical demand for its restoration to Government under an equitable system of compensation. It is as impossible as it is irrational to go on indefinitely discussing land as that which yields wealth without inquiring into whose hands this wealth passes. "An equal or unequal sharing" of the

nation's material resources—a legitimate subject for the economist according to Dr. Bonar—necessitates a settlement of the land question.

2. Labour and its adequate remuneration are also subjects for the economist. At a recent meeting of the British Association the Economic Section discussed the question, "What kinds of consumption best promote the efficiency of the worker?" If this lies within the province of the economist, much more might he inquire, "Whether a man can adequately support a wife and family on eighteen or nineteen shillings a week?"

I visit every week the homes of men who receive this small sum for a week's work. I know the men intimately. I often hear their indignant complaints; and when I observe that many of the masters of such inadequately remunerated men are able to build for themselves large mansions, and live expensively, it seems to me that here is an issue with which economists and moralists ought to deal.

I do not judge these masters; but manifestly the best work and contentment on the part of toilers are impossible under these conditions. The economic system which sanctions such things is bad; and until economists deal with it social progress worthy of the name is impossible.

It is no excuse to argue that "the market

price of labour" is paid, or that many such masters are also princely subscribers to all religious and charitable institutions. All such arguing is hollow, and I do not need to repeat the answer which is made to it. I shall only restate what I have already said, that it is indefensible on economic and moral grounds to oblige consumers to pay too much for *goods* or to underpay workers while and where large profits are gathered in.

3. Capital, as wealth in use, is the third factor which operates in *production*. Capital would present few difficulties for the economists were the questions of land and labour settled. It has its own functions, and it serves definite purposes. It can, however, be abused, and become an instrument of oppression.

On the one side, profitably and rightly, capital can be employed to support labour until the land, or an industry, yields a return. Therein it is useful, and is entitled to remuneration in the form of a reasonable interest. On the other hand, capital may be and often is used to exploit labour. A rate of interest may be exacted such as neither economics nor ethics could justify.

It is this misuse of capital which gives both cause and occasion for the loud cry against its tyrannies, and the demand for the abolition of

capitalism. The misuse spells injustice, and therefore here, as all throughout the economic province, ethics has a right and duty to assert its elevating and purifying power.

Capital, however, like everything else which makes for production, has a right to a fair amount of interest, but the rate cannot be exorbitant without doing injustice to some people, and therefore without violating moral law.

4. Exchange is a more complicated and delicate subject than even capital. Here the informed economist finds room for acute writing and broad generalisations. The ever-varying state of foreign markets, gold passing from one capital to another, and paper notes and money bills, as media of exchange, engage his attention and deeply interest him.

Governments have often interfered with exchange. Most of them authorise the issue of notes, not always on gold held, but on their own credit. This is legitimate ; but the recent enormous influx of gold from the South African mines creates a new situation, and Government should insist upon banks holding a larger reserve of gold. If this be not done the large influx of gold cannot be rightly used, and the sovereign will further and further lose its purchasing power.

It is wholly indefensible for Government to confer privileges on "banks of issue" such as were given by the Act of 1845. Sir Robert Peel frankly conferred these privileges for political reasons. He was repaid for them in political votes. These privileges should be withdrawn; and "banks for the people" guaranteed by Government credit, and lending money at an easy rate, would make for progress.

Here, as elsewhere, the moral as well as the economic factor enters; for the good of all classes is essentially an ethical question. That good would be largely effected were Government to exercise its powers without favour wherever the question of the media of exchange arises.

5. The distribution of commodities is a large and intensely practical subject for economists. But here again the radical questions of land and labour assert themselves. Indeed, these two factors are the most persistent of all elements in economics. They powerfully and extensively affect distribution.

Rent plays an important part, wages another and equally distinctive part, profits also are an agency in the distribution of goods. And to these must be added, as already indicated, taxation and Acts of Parliament.

It would take one too far afield to discuss

all these agencies of distribution. But it should be specially noted that while persistent endeavours are being made to rectify land and labour problems, already working people have done much to solve the question of distribution by their Co-operative Societies.

Combination exists everywhere to-day ; and workmen perceiving its benefits have combined for the purpose of securing an equal share of the profits to all members of these societies.

These societies have told severely upon the private traders. They have diminished their returns, and therefore their profits. In some instances they entirely destroy the small shopkeepers. They employ, it is maintained, fewer servants, and thus lessen employment for a certain class of people.

But, on the other hand, Co-operative Societies have greatly benefited their members. "The dividend" enables them to live in better houses. It secures their rent, and in many instances it encourages them to build, and inhabit their own houses. It leads also to habits of thrift, and makes for a spirit of independence.

The societies, too, are educative institutions. They may make mistakes, but they train their own members, especially those on Committees, in business habits. Besides, almost every society has its literary and education committee ;

and many of the more prosperous give contributions to public institutions.

But, above all, the Co-operative movement has made the distribution of profits among a far larger number than the private trader could benefit. And if they have kept up prices the private trader gains thereby. There are therefore few impartial people, even among those who see the defects of Co-operation, who will maintain that it would be better for the working classes if Co-operative Societies did not exist.

The real question for all who are interested in social progress, so far as Co-operation is concerned, lies in this, that it is part of a larger movement which is economic, or better still, which one might describe as "social," *pace* those who are obsessed with dislike for the use of this term.

Distribution, like production and exchange, will continue to command attention. Co-operative Societies, however beneficial, will not satisfy the growing demand for a fairer share of the fruits of labour. Distribution of profits of all kinds, which are the outcome of labour as well as of capital, must, it is contended, be made.

This is one of the economic problems of the day. It largely explains social unrest; and, as I have endeavoured to show, the cause or causes of the unrest cannot be removed apart from the powerful influence of Christian ethics.

V

Sufficient evidence has been adduced to prove that at every step and stage of all economic movements ethics necessarily enters.

It is, however, possible for one to discuss economic questions after a certain style without giving much attention to the ethical factor. But what is the result? Economic history is read mistakenly unless it be perceived that the neglect of the ethical, and, therefore, human element, has made economic science arid and dry as dust, unattractive and conflicting.

There has accordingly been a loud protest against this method of treatment. I have shown who have led in this protest, and also how increasingly economists of the day recognise the ethical factor. The notable departure from the old method was quite natural; for, when social questions became acute, and demanded intelligent treatment, economists with a large vision saw at once the urgent need for doing justice to ethics.

Social questions need economics. They cannot be solved apart from the science. Scientific treatment is essential. But the science itself requires to be humanised, moralised, and Christianised.

Man is a moral agent. Even in the making

of money he must have regard to the claims of his own moral nature and moral law.

Ethics, therefore, by right and necessity, enters into economics. And Christian ethics especially waits to be enlisted in the service of economics. Its great imperatives, which appeal to the purest motives and point to the loftiest ideals, must be listened to, and effect also given to them by all who wish to see those economic conditions created under which justice will be done to every one, even the humblest worker, who adds to the nation's wealth.

In the vast province of economic practice, as in all the provinces of human life, Christian ethics justifies itself. It insists upon stewardship and brotherhood. It strives after the realisation of a unity which, because deeper and profounder than all differences, gives a place for individual initiative and efforts, while at the same time making the good of all its supreme end. No question, therefore, as to the production, exchange, and distribution of *goods* can be adequately or rightly discussed which leaves this end out of view. Hence the justification of ethics in the economic province.

CHAPTER XIII

CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SOCIAL LIFE

I

CHRISTIAN ethics finds a wide field for the exercise of itself in social life. That life is strong according as it is moral.

Other elements have a place in social life. The material, for instance, has a claim for recognition; for *character* is dependent to a certain extent upon *condition*; and condition is deeply affected by material things. But of all the elements in social life the moral is the most powerful and important.

In dealing with social life, care must, therefore, be taken to give to the moral its own place. It is easy to overlook its claims, and in the busy pursuit of the material to forget them.

This is not unattended with danger; for history shows that great empires have fallen, not so much because of the martial powers which assailed them, as through moral decay. A morally weak nation is doomed.

Since, then, social life is the reflection and expression of the influences of all the agencies which are in operation within it, and since the moral is the most important of these agencies, Christian ethics, as it bears on and moulds social life, deserves a special treatment.

II

Christian ethics begins with the individual, but it treats the individual with a view to the place which he may be fitted to occupy in the family and in society. It is quite distinctive of Christian ethics that it never deals with the individual as an end in himself.

Other ethics may so treat him, but Christian ethics does not. It lends no countenance to *individualism* as ethical and economic schools understand that term.

But it gives the individual his rightful place. It associates infinite value with the human soul whose worth is priceless ; and therefore Christian ethics begins with the individual.

It addresses him. It requires obedience from him to its great imperatives. It aims at making him complete and perfect ; but it does all these things in order that the individual may be an efficient member of society, and that, in turn, society itself may be a fit agency through which self-realisation may be attained.

Complaint is often made that those who have a passion for social progress forget the individual. It is argued that in their eagerness to secure a perfect social life they commit the unpardonable fault of overlooking personal life.

The complaint is without justification. For all who view human life in a true perspective give the individual his own place. They also are among the first to affirm that room should be provided for personal initiative and personal equipment, for the assumption of personal responsibilities, and the discharge of personal duties.

Such room is necessary. The individual requires it. This, however, cannot be treated as an end. It is only a means by the aid of which the individual is fitted to play his part in the battle of life.

III

Since the individual is not complete in himself, and cannot realise his life in isolation, the family, in the first instance, is his fitting place. And here, as in relation to the individual, Christian ethics has much to say. Nowhere else, indeed, is its voice clearer than when it speaks of the sacredness of the family life.

It gives prominence to the family; and it does this for many reasons.

I. As the individual is to the family, so is

the family to the State. The strength and prosperity of the State are dependent upon the home life.

Those countries in which the great majority of people spend their evenings not at home, but in the streets, or in cafés, or places of public entertainment, become in process of time morally decadent. The temptations to loose, licentious living are too powerful for them. Lack of family life and restraint tells directly upon their national life, and renders it susceptible to all those adverse influences which make for moral decay. A strong State needs for its very existence a pure family life.

2. It is in the family that all the finer moral qualities first grow and display their power and beauty.

The reverence of children towards parents develops in the home life. There, indeed, reverence finds its necessary atmosphere, and all the conditions for its growth.

Reverence is the basis of character. The great men who have left a good impress upon history's page have all been men of reverent disposition; and the great majority of them owe much to what their home life has been.

Obedience, the spirit which recognises authority, is first taught in the home. Children learn to submit their *will* to the will of parents,

and in this submission their character is developed.

It is a truism of philosophy to say that the highest freedom is enjoyed when one submits one's will to a will stronger and more informed than one's own. In the well-ordered family this truism is daily illustrated; and Christian ethics above all other ethics enjoins obedience. "Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." "Honour thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee." Love and brotherliness also find their element in the family. There they are natural graces. Affection begets affection. Love accounts for and explains brotherhood. Its power is truly Divine; and in the home it is ever displaying its winsome influence.

Hence self-sacrifice is an invariable trait of character where love is, and rules. No sacrifices are too great for love to make; and it makes them without ever thinking of itself. The mother sacrifices her life for the child she has borne and loves. The father toils early and late. He has the strongest incentive to labour in the knowledge that he is providing for his children's needs. Brother makes a willing sacrifice for a brother. He realises his

own good in seeking his brother's well-being. Unless where love of money or selfishness enters as a disturbing and destroying power of brotherly affection, self-sacrifice constantly expresses itself in the home.

Now, it is largely because these finer moral qualities grow and are displayed in the home that Christian ethics attaches the greatest importance to the family life.

Christ laid great emphasis upon the sacredness of the family life, and taught that the marriage relationship is inviolable. He not only sanctioned the marriage state, but for ever beautified it by His presence at the marriage at Cana of Galilee. The union cannot be broken save by death, or infidelity.

Christian ethics forbids divorce by mutual consent. It does not accept "incompatibility of temper" as a justification for divorce. It guards the home, and counts family relationships as the most sacred of all ties.

IV

The family is the model of the State. In saying this I mean that all the high moral qualities which find their element in the home life should also find their atmosphere in the State. The State is, as Christian ethics teaches, an enlarged family wherein rever-

ence, obedience, love, and self-sacrifice should obtain.

This, some may say, is too Utopian ; it makes too great demands upon human nature ; but the family shows what human nature can bear, and indeed is that in which human life realises its truest development and pleasure.

If, however, all this is but an idle dream, an ideal but an impossible state of things, then must it be frankly acknowledged, that Christian ethics has no message for society. But its great ideals must be accepted, and steadfast endeavours be made by all who accept the Christian Faith to attain to them. There is no alternative.

For it is at once the duty and the privilege of Christian men to apply the high ethics of their Faith to all social institutions. These can only be efficient according as they are Christianised. Examine this statement for a moment.

Society itself is largely moulded by its institutions. These impart to it character. What they are in spirit and in aim society becomes. The institutions are numerous. The State and town councils, schools and the Boards which manage them, charity organisations, social, ethical, and political associations, are the chief institutions. But to these must be added

the church which, when true to her whole mission, is one of the most powerful agencies of social progress.

All these institutions may be effective or the reverse. Their usefulness depends upon the character of the people who constitute them, and carry on their work. Those who give most to these institutions get most from them. That is a universal law.

Now, manifestly it is the duty of all Christian men to bear their share of the work which these institutions attempt. They must do more than merely become members of them. They must ever endeavour to impart the Christian spirit to them. They must do their part ungrudgingly and well. Devotion to the ideals which inspire institutions must be characteristic of them. What fields are open for service! What splendid opportunities are offered to Christian ethics to prove its moral values!

All these institutions can be Christianised. The moral qualities—love and righteousness, self-sacrifice, humility and brotherliness—can stamp themselves even upon the institutions which are chiefly concerned with mere welfare, and much more upon those which have well-being as their chief object. And here, again, history being witness, whenever justice is done to Christian ethics society feels and responds to

the ethical influence which plays upon and moulds it.

But the State itself, the largest of institutions, must be Christianised ; for the character which belongs to a State reflects itself in social life. There is perhaps no factor which so directly determines the motives, actions, and aims that obtain in social life as the character of the State. If in the highest places, where great power and patronage are exercised, honour reigns and rules, then, all departments of social life feel and respond to the elevating influence which plays upon them.

The King, the Government, and high officials may set an example of conduct which is simply incalculable. This example makes for good or evil, for the elevation or the degradation of society. A pure Court tells powerfully upon every home, and therefore upon social life.

If the actions of those who wield authority be dictated by high morals, the whole country enjoys the wholesome benefits of such actions. If the Government stands for justice and fair dealing towards all classes, its influence vibrates through every fibre of the national life. If, again, in its conduct of great international issues it be characterised by justice towards strong, and generosity towards weak, nationalities, such conduct reflects itself in all internal social relationships.

V

I shall attempt a statement and discussion of the question, Can the ethics which applies to individuals and families be also applied to the State and international affairs? But meanwhile, since the elevating influence which belongs to Christian ethics is justifiably assumed, the immediate question which demands consideration is, How far and with what effect is Christian ethics telling upon the social life of to-day?

In order to answer this question, it is first of all necessary to set out plainly the outstanding and characteristic "notes" of social life at the present time.

Social evils exist and abound. It is folly to refuse to recognise them. It betrays heartlessness to treat them as negligible elements in social life; for then they multiply and become a menace to society. If they are, therefore, to be removed a frank recognition of them is essential.

Unjust dealing, exploitation of the defenceless, and other social evils are not only recognised, but also accounted for when it is seen that social factors which make for the good of society have been resisted, and often, indeed, overcome by the too faithful obedience to the

selfish principle that each man should chiefly seek his own gain and pleasure.

That this principle of conduct is obeyed on an extensive scale needs no proof; for, whether one turns to commerce, or politics, or religion, one sees abundant evidence of its wide sway. It prevails everywhere, and with issues that give no enduring satisfaction to those who obey it, while tens of thousands suffer from its heartless operations.

Custom, indeed, gives sanction to individualism; and there are those who seriously defend it on the very ground that it has been long in operation. It is, they say, not something new, something of to-day alone; it has always made its influence felt, and society under its ægis has made some progress.

Now, it deserves to be specially noted that those who thus argue do not rate the benefits which accrue to society from the operation of this principle as other than by-products of individualism. They are frank enough not to claim for these benefits any higher character; and they are rather proud of them.

"See," they exclaim, "how each man seeking his own gain first and foremost confers benefits upon others." This, in their judgment, is one of the strongest defences of individualism. It is also its highest commendation. But in

urging this plea they do not recognise the social evils to which the pursuit of personal gain gives birth. They have no vision of the possibility of an ethically better principle of conduct. They are all for individualism, and rule out of court anything and everything which contradicts it, or hampers its reign.

But is their contention really valid? Is there no awakening of them to something higher and better? Will society, governed by this principle, continue to move always along its well-beaten track? and is there no brighter outlook for the toiling masses who are offered nothing else than this by-product?

The moral sense of the élite of men revolts against the conclusions of the self-satisfied individualist. To this I might add that in the philosophic schools of to-day utilitarianism is discredited; but idealistic philosophy appeals in vain to those who mistakenly imagine that the fullest and highest life is realised by seeking one's own gain.

But an awakening has come from another quarter; for, what neither the morally élite of men protesting, nor the philosophers of the school arguing could effect has been accomplished by the working classes themselves. They have become profoundly conscious of the wrong and misery which they suffer. In

all the great cities of Europe, in towns and villages also, they have awakened to a sense of what is due to them.

Explain their actions as you will. Attribute it to ignorance or to the work of demagogues, yet you cannot close your eyes to the fact that there is a loud protest heard, and a powerful revolt seen everywhere against the economic standard by which their work is valued, and the ethical principles which govern society.

Something fairer and truer is demanded. The demand may not be yet quite articulate. The newly awakened may not see clearly what is to make for their good; but among an ever-increasing number of them the conviction is entertained, that the pursuit of private gain is not the ideal life, and that no possible by-product of it will satisfy them.

Nor has this awakening been without good results. Already some progress towards fairer dealing has been made; but this, so far from wholly meeting all the claims of the newly awakened, has only whetted their desires, and encouraged them to urge more and more earnestly their demand for better conditions under which they may perform their daily work, and a fairer remuneration of their toil be given to them.

This state of things gives to Christian ethics an open door and a great opportunity. An irreparable mistake will be committed if Christian people aim only at repressing the newly awakened spirit, and do not seriously attempt to guide it. The interests of society itself are at stake, and these are of far greater importance even to the individual than anything which makes for self-seeking.

A very unwise and altogether wrong counsel is offered when it is calmly maintained that men, struggling for justice, should be content to sit still in the place which has been assigned to them, and look beyond earth's sins and sorrows for rewards and compensation.

There is just enough truth in this counsel to mislead those who accept it. It is a half truth, and more dangerous than a direct misstatement. It is by no means the whole truth. To be content with such things as one has is not at all inconsistent with one striving to make one's conditions of labour, or home life better and more wholesome. Why, were the counsel which is tendered accepted, in the sense which those who urge it insist upon, an end would be put to all progress.

Whoever does not perceive that contentment is compatible with striving after better conditions does not understand human life, or the obliga-

tions imposed upon all to use wisely their endowments and opportunities. To rise to higher things, making past attainments stepping-stones towards their realisation, is a duty which Christian ethics enforces as plainly as it enjoins contentment. The two are not contradictory. Experience proves that they are complementary ; and the wise submit to the imperative which both express. They perceive clearly that wherever the battle of life is hardest there also men strive for better conditions, and that those win who preserve amidst the strife a well-balanced, collected, and contented mind.

To the wise, again, past advances are prophecies and incentives to greater and greater progress.

Everything, indeed, is on the side of those who thus encounter life's conflicts. The very activities of life urge them onwards. The freedom with which opinions can be stated, and the innumerable *media* through which expression can be given to their wants and aspirations are helps and aids, and make for a higher social life. But this is not all ; for, in addition, the splendid achievements of science, the opening of new countries for the fruits of industry, combination on the part of workmen, the spread of education, and other agencies have made for progress.

But greater than any of these is the influence which Christian ethics has exercised. Social progress is, indeed, largely the resultant of the operation of ethical principles of the highest order, such as Christianity enunciates. Slowly but surely these principles have told upon social life.

To an extent and with an earnestness seldom, if indeed ever on any previous occasion, witnessed, Christian ethics is to-day making its influence powerful. Its saving power and healing virtue have come into prominence just when social evils have been recognised and a loud demand has been made for their removal. Whoever indeed sees deeply enough into the causes which account for and explain social progress is obliged also to confess that Christian ethics with its insistence upon love, righteousness, humility, self-sacrifice, and brotherliness is the power which can at once purify and elevate society.

In the last resort social reformers are bound to appeal to the moral; for, whatever has not moral sanction has no permanence. Christianity is pre-eminently moral, but its moral roots are found in the distinctively spiritual teachings of Christ. These give them vitality, a meaning, an application and direction. And, with all the force of His teachings

inspiring and directing moral actions ultimate victory is assured. Society offers the very field where Christian ethics can effect the most wholesome and enduring results. To society it brings its solution of social evils. Nothing can displace it; nothing be a substitute for it. Slowly it moves to its goal, which is the transformation, regeneration, and elevation of social life.

CHAPTER XIV

CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND INTERNATIONAL LIFE

I

THE relation of ethics to international life is a subject to which public attention is called to-day. It is recognised that international relationships in order to be harmonious must have a strong moral foundation.

Another characteristic marks the present time. The working people of almost all nations have recently become conscious of their solidarity. International relationships have for them an ever-growing and deepening interest. They perceive how much depends upon these relationships being harmonious.

They, however, also understand how easy it is for these same relationships to be strained by the action of unscrupulous financiers, or that of over-zealous statesmen. They know that this is a constant danger, and they therefore ask whether ethics, especially Christian ethics, cannot restrain the unscrupulous and

over-zealous. They accordingly make a powerful appeal to the moral instincts of their fellow-men in all countries. This is a quite distinctive note of international life to-day.

But when an attempt is made to examine and discuss the affairs which lie on the high plane of international life, the question at once arises, Can the moral standard which applies to the individual and the family be also applied to the State? Can individual be compared with national morality? Is the ethics which moulds the individual life valid when an endeavour is made to bring it to bear authoritatively and effectively upon society?

In trying to give a satisfactory answer to these questions, one must recall the arguments which have been urged against the application of individual morality to international actions; and also the practice which obtains in the conduct of international affairs.

The question thus raised, it should be said, has the merit of being easily stated. This is a great advantage. Lord Lytton puts it in this precise form: "Are the definite rules which govern private conduct equally applicable to the conduct of communities?"¹

It might be replied at once that Christian ethics does not deal with rules. It is *spirit*.

¹ *Rectorial Address*, Glasgow University, Nov. 9, 1888, p. 6.

It does not commit itself to regulations, but enunciates principles of conduct. The application of these to ever-varying conditions it leaves to those who have caught its *spirit*.

But, still further, it might be replied that, just because Christian ethics is *spirit*, it is progressive. I do not mean that it changes in character, but only that as light is thrown across the path of individuals and nations the application of its principles is gradually extended; and that, what at one time may have seemed impossible, as the light increases and men and nations take in its living spirit, becomes altogether both possible and reasonable.

There is, for instance, at the present time an insistence upon the application of Christian ethics to international affairs which even twenty years ago was not thought of.

Let diplomatists, who do not always breathe the purest moral atmosphere, say what they may, Christian ethics is accepted as the greatest force in the world, and an ever-increasing number maintain that it can be, and must be, applied to all international affairs. Lying even for the assumed benefit of one's country is now widely condemned.

But diplomatists a few years ago justified, and some may still defend, such base action.

There are indeed those who "suffer from an excessive desire to show how complicated they can make diplomacy." They delight in diplomatic agreements with many sub-clauses, for the interpretation of which they reserve a secret code.

The vast majority of the people, however, now denounce all such subterfuges, and with a loud voice demand that international affairs be discussed in the open and in daylight. Nations are no more morally entitled to gamble with the interests of other nations than the individual with other people's money.

Hence the insistent cry for a frank and open treatment of all international questions. Nations have nothing to lose, but everything to gain, by straightforward conduct. Diplomacy should run as clear as the mountain stream.

Wars have been due more frequently to secret diplomacy, and to the mistaken and misguided actions of unwise and over-zealous diplomatists than to any other cause. These actions will perhaps for a time be repeated with the same disastrous results; but any person who knows the spirit of the present time is also aware that generous upright action on the part of nations towards nations is insisted upon as it never was in preceding ages.

Publicists, and innumerable writers in the daily *press*, insist upon such action. They see plainly that it makes for national credit, goodwill, and prosperity; and there is no doubt at all but that this demand, the outcome of a clearer perception of Christian ethics, is to-day doing more to arrest war than any other factors. Nations that turn a deaf ear to it are rightly counted still in a barbarous condition, while those who respond to it take their place among the great Powers.

II

But can moral law, applicable to individuals, be applied to nations? When this question is raised two extreme answers are at once given, and that too with great assurance on the part of those who return them. On the one side, there are some who say that the entire Decalogue applies to nations as to individuals; and, on the other side, there are those who, with Lord Lytton, maintain "that hardly a single proposition applicable to the one can be properly applied to the other."¹

The one answer is too rigid, because there are certain moral acts with which the Decalogue deals that are only possible to individuals. The other is too sweeping, because there are moral

¹ Lytton's *Rectorial Address*, p. 18.

acts possible to nations, as such, and respecting which the Decalogue also speaks plainly.

But when one makes these statements one is at once in the region of controversy ; and an examination of the arguments urged becomes a necessity.

Perhaps to those who are all for an application of the whole Decalogue to nations, it is enough to reply that Christian ethics deals with the spirit of the Decalogue. It does not particularise the contents of the Decalogue. It sums them up in the one comprehensive requirement : love to God and to one's fellow-men. "Love," it says, "is the fulfilling of the whole law."

Amplest room is thus given for the exercise of individual duties, without any attempt at writing out rules ; and as to national or international moral obligations the same spirit must interpret and enforce these, but, again, without any hard-and-fast regulations. All such regulations are foreign to the spirit of Christian ethics. That spirit is restricted by no national bonds, and cannot be. It sees man as man, and also deals with nations in their corporate capacity. It claims the right to rule and reign everywhere without distinction as to class, or national interests ; for, its rule makes for the good of all, and unites mankind in a universal brotherhood.

That is its ideal and goal. However much it may be neglected or denied, however Utopian or impossible it may be counted, yet it sets up this high ideal, and summons all who profess the Christian Faith ever to strive for its realisation. It supplies them at the same time with the strongest and purest motives. It also sustains them with the brightest hopes. The moral must ultimately prevail.

If one who cherishes these hopes were, however, to conclude that all objections are removed, a great mistake would be made. For many arguments are urged against the application to nations of the same moral standard which is applied to individuals.

I shall deal only with those arguments which seem to carry most weight, and are most frequently used. I shall also attempt a reply to them.

1. It is contended that the same standard cannot apply, because "self" cannot be predicated of a nation. The individual is a "self"; the nation is not; and therefore it is argued that in the absence of selfhood morals do not apply to national and international affairs.

The distinction thus made is true. It is also quite legitimate to state, and even to press it, if one thereby hopes to gain aught. But can

this distinction justify the inference which is drawn from it? Take a parallel case. "Self" cannot be affirmed of the family. It has no more selfhood than the nation. Proof, however, has already been adduced of the applicability of Christian ethics to the family. Within the home circle, it has been shown, love, humility, self-sacrifice, and brotherliness find their element and display their winsome power.

It should, therefore, one might legitimately reply, be sufficient to contend that if all that is distinctive of Christian ethics obtains in the family, so also must all find their element in the State and in international relationships. If the absence of "self" does not prevent their reign in the family, it cannot hinder their operation in the national or international life.

Before, therefore, you can argue that the moral standard applicable to the individual does not in its spirit and in most of its distinctive requirements apply to the national life, you must deny the application of these to the family. But no one will venture upon such a denial. The family life with its pure affection and brotherly devotion to each member's good is seen and honoured everywhere. It witnesses to the wholesome power of ethics.

The nation may, therefore, also present the same witness. There is nothing in the nature

of things to prevent it. Want of a world-wide brotherly sympathy may meanwhile hinder its operation; but Christianity evokes such sympathy; and Christianity also contemplates the time when all the world over brotherliness shall obtain. Old Testament prophets saw this time in rapt vision, and were captivated by the beauty and peace of the spectacle which passed before their eyes. Christ and His Apostles spoke in plain and definite terms respecting its realisation; and Christianity will only come to its own when the time arrives, and men, made of one blood, shall live in concord and peace.

There will, I know, be those who say that one is allowing one's imagination to run riot when thus one thinks or writes. But what is the alternative to the acceptance of the clear statements of Christ as to brotherly conduct and all its beautiful actions? It is nothing other than a rejection of Himself, and a repudiation of His teachings. No Christian can be guilty of such rejection and repudiation; and if not, then, he must accept and cherish the hope which Christ has outlined, nor close his eyes against the dazzling brightness which flashes from the realised Purpose of love and mercy, peace and goodwill among men.

But to come down to the common and hard facts of life. Though "self" cannot be predicated of a nation in the same sense in which it is of individuals, yet nations can act in a corporate capacity. This, indeed, they must always do. Their action, too, must be guided by some principle or principles.

Here, perhaps, it may be enough to say that if history be taken as one's instructor there is nothing more plainly written in its pages than that "righteousness exalteth a nation," and that thus, and thus only, can a nation be strong and enduring. If, then, nations can govern their actions by righteousness, it must also be possible for them to act generously, as our Government did towards South Africa. Their actions can, indeed, be brotherly and without a rigid regard to so-called self-interests alone. The nation, like the individual, is strongest which obeys the highest ethics and aims at realising its life through the lives of other nations. This truth, which Christian ethics states and enforces, is gradually and with the best results dawning upon men's minds in all nations.

2. But, next, when the argument from self or the absence of self is ruled out, recourse is had to another, which those who urge it think to be unanswerable. It proves, in their opinion, how

impossible it is to apply moral standards to nations and international affairs.

Thus, it is with great confidence contended that while individuals may often act from motives of honour and from a sense of duty, there is always the fear of the law which restrains dishonest actions. But nations, it is said, have no law to fear; for there is no superior force which can compel obedience. Nations can only make laws for themselves. No nation is strong enough to impose its will upon other nations.

But this argument is extended further; for it is maintained that International Law is only "a courteous and dignified means of disposing of international questions"; that it has no force behind it; and that when, say as at the Hague, international issues are examined in order to ascertain which nation has "right" on its side, it is discussion and nothing else which goes on. The respective advocates, however high their personal character, always debate with a strong bias in favour of their own countries.

From this is made the despairing deduction that "it is a mere dream to suppose it possible to establish, otherwise than as a castle in the air, a system of international rights and duties, which can be applied to the nations of the

world *as they are*," and that "every principle laid down in such a system" is "arbitrary and not founded on fact."¹

Now, here again there is just enough truth in these statements to mislead those who make the *legal* and the *moral* one and the same thing. But the two are not identical. The absence of physical force to compel obedience cannot affect the character of moral actions. Force may be a deterrent, but cannot make the morally wrong morally right. The moral has its own province. The legal may enter into that province; but unless in so far as it strives to give expression to what is morally right, it clothes itself in garments not its own, and assumes power to which it has no claim.

The legal must not, therefore, be identified with the moral. The moral stands by itself, and for ever utters its imperatives whether or not there be physical force to support them.

To bring in an outside force into a question of morals is, indeed, to confuse the question at issue. Force has nothing to do with it. Force is in no sense a solvent or a remedy. The right persists and cannot be silenced. For a time physical power may seem to prevail, but the right will ultimately assert itself and claim its own.

¹ Lytton's *Rectorial Address*, p. 15.

But when this argument is further examined, it is soon perceived that everything turns upon what one understands by *morals*. If moral actions be nothing other than such as are sanctioned by "the opinion of others and of oneself," or such as are dictated by regard to their natural consequences, or merely as "customs moulded by reflection" and enforced by public opinion or physical force, then the argument may carry a certain weight.

But this is the old utilitarian contention, which has been a thousand times exploded. It no more explains the moral phenomena of international life than it does those of the individual life. Philosophy to-day has set it aside, and substitutes for it "devotion to the ideal of the Good" as the motive and end of moral action.

Naturalism, it is true, has recently tried to invest the argument with new vitality; but naturalism makes "might" the only moral value; it knows nothing higher and better. This, however, cannot explain the content of moral action; and if an attempt be made to govern international life by the ethics of naturalism, failure is as certain as when the same principle is applied to the individual life.

3. But, driven from this position, publicists hastily take up another, and contend that one,

when discussing the question of the moral standard applicable to nations, must break away from the schools of philosophy, and examine the actualities of international life. In the same breath it is said that a person is incapable of contracting valid liabilities until he reaches a certain age, while nations can always enter into contracts; and further, that a man's legal rights are unaffected by lapse of time, whereas a nation's are affected; for the man is always one and the same, while a nation is always changing.

But have nations not an infancy as well as individuals? Or, are they full grown in a day? They must have a beginning; and history shows that in the earlier stages of their growth they are as powerless as minors. They may enter into contracts with other and stronger nations, but unless moral principles rule the actions of the stronger, the nations still in infancy are defenceless. They can enforce nothing, and they are therefore very much in the position of minors.

But to deduce anything from the immaturity of individuals or nations is again to confuse the question at issue; for it is not one as between children and infant States, but as between responsible individuals and responsible nations. Maturity in each case is assumed; and there-

fore the only question which can be debated is, whether the same moral standard can be applied to, and the same moral obligations required from both individuals and nations. This question is not affected by minorhood.

Again, can lapse of time change the character of any moral action? Remember the question in dispute is not legal, but moral. Legal decisions depend upon precedents, as these are interpreted by well-informed and impartial judges; but no one can pretend that they always and ever carry with them moral approval. One judge differs from another, though each has the same precedents before him. Courts differ from courts; and the element of uncertainty is always present, however able and impartial the judges may be; but no uncertainty prevails in moral actions. Difference of opinion may obtain as to the *why*—never as to *what* is moral.

Circumstances may change for the individual as for the nation, but moral obligations cannot be affected by change of circumstances. The moral law is constant. It ever utters its imperatives; and the individual or nation that disregards them must suffer the consequences of the violation of moral law. Were it otherwise, the very foundations upon which nations rest would be undermined.

This cannot be insisted upon too strongly ; and any one who refuses to recognise the moral element as essential to a nation's strength and endurance not only overlooks the operations of moral law, but also closes his eyes against the plain teachings of history.

5. But when an examination has been made of the four positions in which those entrench themselves who maintain that moral law does not apply to nations as to individuals, one soon sees them leaving their entrenchments, and coming into the open, boldly affirming, *first*, that "prudent moderation" is all that can be required from nations, and *secondly*, that you cannot judge statesmen and diplomatists as you ought to judge individuals.

III

It would take too much space to answer in detail these two affirmations. If what has been already stated be accepted as evidence of their insecure positions, then their confident affirmations must also already be greatly weakened.

But examine them on their merits ; and at once it occurs to one to say that if "prudent moderation" can be attributed to a nation other moral qualities must also be possible to them.

"Moderation" is ethical. Ancient Greek moralists gave it a high place. Christian ethics strongly commends it. Prudence, again, implies the selection of an ethical element as one's guide. Prudence may not be rated highly; but still it entails forethought and the exercise of wisdom. A prudent course of action necessitates, indeed, the possession of many fine ethical qualities. It is not a product of nothing.

If, then, nations can respond to the claims of "prudent moderation," it must also be within their reach to attempt a sympathetic understanding with each other. Due recognition of what belongs to each other must likewise be possible; and each may pay respect to the legitimate aspirations of other nations, and all live in friendly relationship.

But analyse these statements, and you discover at the root of them justice, fair dealing as between nation and nation; brotherliness, a regard for what makes for each other's good and the good of all; humility, a just estimate of what is due to others, and no overweening thoughts as to one's greatness and worth; and even, in a measure, self-sacrifice, a willingness to subordinate one's interests to those of others.

All these qualities are possible to nations. Christian ethics insists upon them. Christ,

our Lord, came to establish a new social order for nations as for individuals. He gave to the moral qualities, which have just been named, the very highest place in His teachings.

Whoever else may, the exponent of Christian ethics dare not, therefore, overlook His gracious imperatives, or fail to make strenuous efforts to apply them not only to the individual, but also to international life. The social progress of mankind depends upon obedience to His teachings.

If, then, there be any truth in these statements, the contention that those who conduct a nation's dealings with other nations must not be judged by the same standard which is applied to individuals cannot be maintained. It may be difficult to discover who is to be blamed when international relationships are strained or actually broken ; for diplomatists and statesmen carry on their negotiations with great secrecy, and they adopt all kinds of means to shift responsibility for broken relationships on to other shoulders than their own. But is not this very effort to avoid responsibility a clear proof of a consciousness of moral blameworthiness? If otherwise, why are efforts made to escape it?

But this apart, history, which can only be written when official documents are made public,

contains the severest judgments upon, and censures of, those statesmen and diplomatists who have acted unfairly towards other nations. Lying, rapacity, and cruelty are not only not excused by historians, but if resort be made to these agencies to secure national gains, condemnation is pronounced upon those who make such resort. These qualities cannot make for the health, strength, and prosperity of a nation. Righteousness is essential; it alone exalts a nation.

Or apply another test. Of what are lovers of their country most proud? Is it not when valour has been enlisted and employed on behalf of the weak and oppressed? Is it not when their escutcheon is unblotted and unstained with deeds of wrong and cruelty? No poet has ever sung his nation's praise on account of its lying and deceit. The lyre is silent when deeds of shame are done.

Historians and poets, therefore, unite in condemnation of wrong-doing; and if this be admitted, the statesman or diplomatist who employs his country's martial power to suppress the weak or to abet the unscrupulous has justly a place among wrong-doers. His action deserves reprobation severer than that which can be rightly visited upon the individual; for his actions carry with them consequences which

spread over wide provinces, and affect large numbers of unoffending people.

These things are becoming plainer and plainer every day. Nations recognise them. More and more they appeal to the moral element when disputes rage. In the long-run the moral tells; for the moral merits in a dispute count decisively.

IV

The conclusion, therefore, to which one is irresistibly led is, that international life can respond to, and be moulded by, ethical principles. That there are certain duties which only individuals can discharge does not exclude ethics from international life. It is enough that these great ethical obligations apply to nations; and that obedience to these, makes nations strong and legitimately proud of their corporate moral actions.

Nor, again, must the alleged impossibility of codifying international Laws be taken as proof that ethics does not apply to international life. For nations, like individuals, are not limited by the legal. In the case of individuals the great majority of acts are done without respect to legal requirements. The most winsome personal life is, indeed, not that which is governed by legalism. The *good*

man stands on a far higher pedestal than the merely *just*. "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." The truly moral life is above the legal. Freedom belongs to the moral; restraints attach themselves to the legal.

The same principles apply to nations. Legal enactment is, at best, but the handmaid of the moral. Legalism may support the moral, but the moral is superior to it. The moral is independent, and makes its imperative claims. Nations are increasingly recognising it. International business transactions, for instance, rest not upon superior physical force, but upon credit and honour. Motives higher than the merely legal may, therefore, govern all international relationships. Generosity, sympathy, kindness, righteousness, and brotherliness are not impossible to nations. Force has been too long tried; but to-day there is on the part of the working classes of all nations a demand for the application of ethics to international life. Already, as just stated, it applies to and is enough for business transactions. It may well, and with great benefits, be applied to all international affairs. A State maintained by preparations for war is barbarous. It is entirely without moral foundation, and there-

fore without that on which alone, as history shows, nations can be strongly built.

I emphasise for these reasons the conclusion to which one is irresistibly led, that international life can be, and should be, governed by ethics. As I have again and again all throughout these pages stated, Christianity has a message for nations. It addresses mankind without respect to time or place. It knows no limits, no national boundaries. It requires from nations in their corporate capacity obedience to its great and distinctive ethical teachings. These can be applied to all international affairs; and the nation which persistently endeavours to put its ethics into practice is the nation which will endure.

One is not indulging in idle prophecy who affirms this truth. History supports it. Experience, as yet on a limited scale, verifies it. The moral instincts of men of all nations endorse it; but, above all, the Christian Faith constantly affirms it and teaches all who accept the Faith to labour and pray, neither doubting nor despairing, for the hastening on of the day when a universal brotherhood will be realised.

CHAPTER XV

CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SOCIALISM

I

THE treatment of the subject, which I have endeavoured to set out in its historical and practical aspects, would not be complete were an attempt not made to examine the relation of Christian ethics to Socialism.

I am well aware of the difficulties which beset such an attempt. The very term "Socialism" is to many good people *anathema*. If one tries even with the utmost impartiality and restraint to examine Socialism one does not thereby escape assailants.

In the treatment of no other subject is one so exposed to misunderstanding as when one deals with this burning and present-day question. If on a survey of evidences anything be written adverse or favourable to Socialism, the writer's motives and aims are at once questioned. Your extreme men on both sides loudly and bitterly complain.

I know what this means. I have read

reviews of my works on *The Church and Social Betterment*, *The Foundations of Society*, and *The Social Ideal and Dr. Chalmers' Contribution to Economics* in Socialist and Individualist Journals. I refer for a moment to two of these reviews. I cite them as illustrations of the difficulties that are encountered when one tries to interpret the Social Movement. The *Labour Leader*, in an able and not unsympathetic review of *The Church and Social Betterment*, seriously took me to task, and severely blamed me, because I had not gone far enough, and with fine finality affirmed that Churchmen must adopt the whole programme of Socialists, otherwise the Church is doomed.

The Spectator, on the other hand, in its review of my *Social Ideal*, charged me with sheltering my Socialism behind Holy Scripture and Dr. Chalmers. I had quoted St. Paul's words, "No man liveth unto himself," as proof of the Apostle's approval and commendation of the socialistic spirit. The reviewer acrimoniously asked if I did not know that this passage had nothing to do with socialism.

The editor courteously allowed me to reply, and I in turn asked the reviewer if he so bound himself by a rigid exegesis as not to perceive that St. Paul's words embodied a principle which is essentially socialistic.

To this in his rejoinder the reviewer made no answer, but attempted to discredit Dr. Chalmers' often-repeated and deliberate opinion, that there is no centage too high with which to tax land, by quoting with approval Professor Smart's adverse judgment upon some words written by Dr. Chalmers when he was twenty-seven years of age. The reviewer either did not know, or he suppressed the fact, that Dr. Chalmers wrote the work on *Political Economy*, by which he wished to be judged, and on which he set a higher store than on any other of his many eloquent and well-informed books, when he was fifty-two years of age.

So much for the reviewer's intentionally biasing statement that I sheltered my Socialism behind Holy Scripture and Dr. Chalmers. I did not regard it worth the trouble to reply to his evasion of the question at issue, though I greatly regretted that in the pages of a high-class journal, like *The Spectator*, Dr. Chalmers' economic teachings were misstated and misrepresented.

II

But in dealing with Socialism one has not only to encounter misunderstandings and unmerited abuse, one has also to attempt a treatment of a Movement which has not yet been

defined. Those, indeed, who profess to give it momentum and guidance have not even described it in a manner satisfactory to themselves.

Most ardent advocates are acutely divided in opinion. They differ not only as to agencies, but also as to what Socialism attempts to accomplish. Witness the complaint of a convinced Socialist. Mr. Richard Higgs, writing evidently with the approval of the editor of *The Socialist Review* in its issue of January 1912, commits himself to the statement, "I say deliberately," he writes, "that you have not yet had the complete Socialist case put before you at all. Socialism," he adds, "as it is preached to-day by all Socialist parties is a town Socialism. It is a one-sided thing, and utterly unpracticable."

This uncertainty is perhaps inevitable; for Socialism, rightly understood, is a spirit. It may have now one, now another, manifestation. It cannot be limited to one form or method of expression.

But many have attempted to give it a hard-and-fast setting. These forthwith ostracise from their fellowship all who cannot accept their formulas.

Test-words are, indeed, ever apt to attach themselves to all Movements, religious and

social; and a rigid adherence to a shibboleth has wrecked many a good cause.

Account, therefore, must be taken, in the treatment of Socialism, of the uncertainty, and also of the impatience which prevail. These constitute barriers to an impartial examination of Socialism as formidable as those erected by misunderstandings and misrepresentations.

But notwithstanding these difficulties an attempt should be made to ascertain the content and character of Socialism. In the interests, too, of Christian ethics both should be rightly apprehended and, if possible, accurately stated. No progress worthy of the name can be made until the Movement itself is understood.

Now, as already said, Socialism is a *spirit*, and must not, strictly speaking, be made one and the same thing as its manifestation, or the form and method through which it expresses itself.

This distinction is necessary, fundamental, and all-important. For, many mistaking the temporary agencies by means of which attempts have been made towards the realisation of the spirit for the spirit itself, have condemned Socialism. If these agencies have been hastily selected and employed, if especially they have been inadequate or ill-suited to the purpose for which they have been used, failure to

express the spirit necessarily and inevitably follows.

History supplies many instances of such failure. Its pages are also full of harsh judgments pronounced upon social reformers who have been blamed for their fruitless efforts. But history records more than these things; for it makes plain to those who read its records with care, that the indiscriminating have themselves lamentably failed to distinguish between the spirit and the imperfect agencies used to give it expression. They have also committed the old and ever-persistent fault, of judging others rather than sitting first in judgment upon themselves.

It is often their own insight which is at fault. If they had seen deeply into the socialistic spirit, if they had differentiated between it and its manifestations, and especially if they had taken due account of times and circumstances, of the imperfect means at the hands of social reformers, and also of the not unnatural impatience of these reformers, who like all other workers doubtless wished to see immediate results—if these things had been done, then, reasoned and temperate judgments only would have been pronounced, much of the needless bitterness imparted to the controversies would have been absent, and prejudice

would not have thrown its ugly body across the path of progress.

The first thing, therefore, that should be attempted is to ascertain the content and character of the spirit which is designated socialistic ; and next, whence its origin. When these two questions are answered one watches with a deeper interest its operations, and marks those features of the socialistic spirit which give to it the strongest commendation. I shall attempt a brief statement on each of these mind-engrossing subjects.

The term *socialistic* is to a certain extent an indication of the content and character of the spirit itself. There is nothing of the nature of the selfish or self-seeking in the spirit. It is more, indeed it is something far higher, than self-love *plus* benevolence. It ever goes out of the narrow sphere wherein exclusive attention is paid to self-interests. In its outgoings it pervades all things with a sweet, wholesome influence.

It is of its very essence to do the maximum of good to people of all classes and all conditions. It is in nature beneficent. Its atmosphere is the pure air of love and goodness. It cannot rest satisfied so long as there are wrongs to be righted and sufferings to be relieved. It does battle with the giant, Injustice,

and wars against unrighteousness in all its forms.

Its realm of operations is social life. It inspires with a mighty courage all who labour for the establishment of harmonious social relationships. The poor and the defenceless are its objects; and all who hear its gentle persuasive voice are enjoined and encouraged to care for them.

It cannot brook the unwarranted seizure of land, place, and power. It gives no countenance to mere personal ends alone. It does not too highly rate material things, but it is patient with those whom greed of possession governs and rules. It never justifies their unbrotherly action. It reproves and condemns them, but at the same time it takes account of their environment, which is often unfavourable to moral growth, of their lack of information as to the highest things, and also of their lack of worthy ideals.

It, therefore, tempers judgment with mercy. Harsh tones are foreign to it. It is always gentle, kind, and if ever severe, its severity is that of love, which cannot tolerate faults and failings in its objects, but yearns to make them good.

The socialistic spirit commends all noble and disinterested actions. Its notes of praise are

pitched on the highest key. It fills the world with its joyful song. It erects enduring monuments in honour of the morally élite who, courageously and gladly responding to its claims, have spent their lives in performing self-sacrificing deeds and have thus enriched the moral heritage of mankind, and sent humanity at an accelerated speed along the path of progress.

The men whose names shine brightest on the page of history, and whose actions evoke the greatest admiration and praise, have been those who knew and obeyed this spirit. The spirit itself has been the preserving and elevating power in society. Moral decay is unknown where it exists and rules. It rules, indeed, wherever it exists. Its sacred power cannot be easily resisted. Whoever rejects it suffers self-reproof.

It persuades and convinces. It owes nothing to physical force. It is altogether moral in character. It is a tree in the garden of life whose fruit never fails. Other trees, rooted in self-interest and nurtured by self-gains, may for a season blossom, and promise fruit; but those who plant and tend them gather in the autumn of life only a produce which moulders in their hands.

All that is enduring and wholly satisfying

comes from this spirit. Words in praise of its character cannot be too strong; its content is described and illustrated by gracious and brotherly deeds which it ever inspires and commends.

Such is, as I understand it, the spirit of socialism. But whence comes it? The only answer which history and experience warrant one in returning is, to say that it is Christian in origin. It is only Christianity which originates and inculcates this spirit. It came into the world with Christ. He was the Teacher who imparted it to men, taught it, enforced it, and illustrated it.

This does not require to be argued again, though it must be repeated that the conception of a world-wide brotherhood, inspired by love, is the creation of Christianity. All who have been captivated by the beauty of the socialistic spirit, and have given themselves to social service, owe the spirit which inspires them to the Christian Faith. They may or may not recognise its origin; but it can be traced to no other than to Christ and His teachings. Evidence will be supplied in a moment that the socialistic spirit cannot be deduced from hedonistic ethics in any one of its many interpretations.

In making this great claim for the Christian

Faith, I do not forget that there is much beautiful moral teaching in ancient Greek literature, and that especially among the Stoics some high virtues were singled out for commendation. I know also that Confucius and his followers saw deeply into moral life ; and that worshippers of Buddha practise a self-denial which would be beautiful were it not so irrational and merely physical.

Christianity surpasses Stoicism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. It is more than any one of these. Its ethics is the highest. Every one with a metaphysic of life, Nietzscheans excepted, recognises and praises its lofty moral teachings.

III

But when one has ascertained the content and character of socialism, and also its origin, there are, as already stated, several features in the operation of the socialistic spirit which deserve attention ; for, according as these are carefully noted so will the value of this spirit become apparent, and its powerful influence in social progress be appreciated.

First : The socialistic spirit can adjust itself to the conditions of human life. It can do this just because it is spirit, and is separable, at least in thought, from all its manifestations. It is true that it is ever seeking to improve

these conditions, and is also ever endeavouring to make them its handmaids; but it can, and when faithfully obeyed does, allow room for individual initiative and personal responsibility.

Rightly understood, it makes also for independence; not that every one can do what he likes and without respect to the interests of others, but that it encourages and ministers to the best use of one's endowments, mental and moral. It does not lead to a dull uniformity. Variability of expression is its natural and necessary outcome. It cannot be limited to one mode, or method, or agency. It is life, and commands the use of the best agencies, now adopting one of them and now another.

Second: A synthesis, which pulsates with vitality, unites the individual to the social, and does the amplest justice to both. "The individual is a 'whole' in himself, and is a growing personality."¹ He has a value which is so great that all social progress depends upon personalities. On the other hand, society is that through which the individual realises his life; it is essential to him; his life finds within it the necessary conditions for its development.

This deeper synthesis, which at once unites together and explains the individual and the

¹ *Vide* Dr. Theodor von Haering's *Ethics of the Christian Life*, p. 146.

social, gives also fullest scope for personal initiative, responsibility, and independence; but at the same time it emphasises social relationships and social duties. It therefore accounts for and does justice to the individual and society. It shows plainly that the one is the complement of the other.

It need only here be added that were due attention paid to this deeper and truer reading of human life, which is approved alike by philosophy and experience, the great majority of the conflicts between the individual and the social would be obviated; and a basis for what is true in individualism and socialism would be provided.

From the beginning Christian ethics has been urging this reconciliation; and to-day, after a long weary path has been trodden by earnest investigators, both the need for a reconciliation and its possibility are coming within the vision of an ever-increasing number of men.

Third: There are many people who to-day profess Socialism as their creed. They have discarded allegiance to all political parties which have hitherto legislated and ruled. They have constituted themselves a party; and in all countries have already made their influence felt.

Now, here a question of great value arises. Have all these, or even a majority of them, attempted to realise the content and character of the spirit which they profess to obey? As already seen, this spirit is as beautiful as it is powerful. It fascinates the morally pure. It wins the admiration and commands the service of the unselfish. But it also makes large demands upon those who accept it as a guide and rule of life. It requires constant and continual self-sacrifice. It tolerates nothing which stands in the way of brotherhood.

Has this spirit, then, been taken as the inspiring motive of all who have enrolled themselves as Socialists? History and observation answer this question; and it is an instructive reply which they make. Both tell how vast numbers adopt socialistic programmes without examining the spirit which is assumed to vitalise all their projects, and also without realising that a high moral fitness is essential to the carrying out of their programmes.

It is a thankless and also a hazardous task which one undertakes when one points to these omissions. I shall only venture to say that this neglect largely explains the unreasoned hostility to Christianity which prevails in many socialistic quarters; the scorn with which workmen, who are not Socialists and make no

profession of obedience to its beautiful spirit, treat their fellow-workmen who, while professing Socialism, give a poor illustration of its spirit in their workshops and in their homes; and the contention of active Christian people, who say that without professing Socialism they do more to relieve distress and help the helpless than all Socialists.

IV

There are, however, Socialists who attempt to account for the socialistic spirit. How do they explain it? They know nothing higher than the worship of Science. They are all for the materialisation of history. They give to evolution, a formula capable of many interpretations, a wholly materialistic reading, and interpret all development in terms of economics alone.

Those who thus attempt to explain the origin of the socialistic spirit actually derive the highest and purest factor in social life from the material! But they claim to be philosophers, and try to accomplish that which both Bentham and Stuart Mill failed to do. Bentham in vain tried to reconcile the seeking of self-interests with benevolence. As already stated, Mill was profoundly conscious of the *hiatus* in Bentham's argument; but he too, as almost all

philosophers now recognise, failed to bridge the chasm between utilitarianism and the socialistic principles, which in his later years he so earnestly advocated.

By no process of argument can the brotherly spirit of Socialism be deduced from a utilitarian theory. The theory is not in any sense even social, and it justifies nothing, save hedonistic ethics of the most repellent type.

No; not from this theory can the socialistic spirit receive any support. It must be accounted for on other grounds and for other reasons. In brief, it can only be explained by Christian ethics, the basis and character of which have already been set out clearly by taking into thoughtful and sympathetic consideration all that Christ taught and enforced.

The material has its place, and a large place too, in human life; but there is, as Plato perceived, as St. Paul taught, and as Hegel in recent times has proven, a spiritual development. In its terms alone can the socialistic spirit be explained.

It is, in the interests of social progress, of the first importance that this spirit should be traced to its origin, and that all who profess obedience to it should know it. As already often said, the spirit is beautiful in character, winsome in its operations, and is the elevating

and purifying power in the individual life and in all social relationships.

V

But when one has stated all that one can say respecting the origin, content, and character of the socialistic spirit, there still remains a question to which many eagerly look for a satisfactory answer ; for, the greater problem of the day is, how best to give expression to the socialistic spirit.

Agencies innumerable have been tried. These have a long and instructive history. Robert Owen was all for limited communities and co-operative societies ; Saint Simon for the State control of land and capital ; Fourier for impracticable programmes of social reform ; Louis Blanc for the enlistment of politics in the service of social revolution and for national workshops ; Proudhon and Bakunin for simple anarchy ; Lassalle for national unity and workers' Unions as the effective agencies of social progress ; and Karl Marx, greatest of all, was for open revolution as the only agency which, in his opinion, would change society and make it better.

Marx made many predictions, such as, that the only path of progress is that of revolution, and that as the years went on wealth would be

gathered into fewer and fewer hands ; but subsequent events have falsified his forecasts. He also robbed the Social Movement of the idealism with which earlier Socialists had inspired it. He interpreted all history in terms of economics, and made, not the religious or moral element, but the material, supreme.

To-day a host of men and women are engaged in the same task as that which occupied the attention of these Socialists. Kautsky, Bernstein, Jaurès, Vanderveldt, and Ramsay MacDonald are among the better-known leaders. These may hold by different philosophies of life, but they are all alike in trying to discover the best agencies by means of which the socialistic spirit may express itself.

Socialists are divided into two well-defined groups, syndicalists and revisionists. The former follow Marx, and still profess to believe in revolutions ; the latter declare for Parliamentary agencies, and use political power for the accomplishment of social reforms.

Evidence abounds that in all countries revisionism is growing in favour with the working classes. Experience is teaching them that social progress is effected by degrees, and that political agencies can be utilised in the interests of the great masses of the people. Revisionists work alike with intelligence and energy.

It would be repeating a trite saying if one were to insist that a sympathetic attitude should be adopted when trying to judge the merits of the agencies, which are used to give expression to the socialistic spirit. That may be taken for granted ; but it is more important to observe that the best theoretic schemes are seldom realised in practice as those who formulated these schemes anticipated. Account must always be taken of the human element, and of ever-varying circumstances.

How the socialistic spirit will ultimately and finally express itself in industrial affairs, and in social life, no one can say. If history be taken as a guide, and its teachings as warnings, it is as unwise to make predictions as it is to formulate theories. The next step in the social evolution cannot, indeed, always be seen, and much less the final stage.

No one, for instance, emerging from slavery could have foretold that serfdom would be the next step ; nor again could one, watching serfdom passing into the Guild life, and that again to wage-earning, have described the present conditions of labour. It is equally impossible to speak with finality respecting future industrial developments. Each person must be true to the light that is given to him ; but the light which one enjoys cannot be the test and

standard by which future developments are to be measured, or even anticipated.

To-day the State is gradually taking over more and more industrial enterprises. The process is likely to go on ; but its safe rate of speed will depend upon due provision being made for individual initiative, personal responsibility, and independence operating within well-defined limits prescribed by the general good. The interests of each must be pursued in the sphere where the interests of all are predominant ; not that some may be eased and others burdened, but that the abundance of the former may be a supply for the wants of the latter, that there may be equality.

This is the principle which St. Paul enunciated, and urged Christian people to adopt and practise. It is wholly Christian, and is derived from Christ, who though He was rich for man's sake became poor. He set the highest and most perfect example of self-sacrifice. He also displayed the spirit which alone can inspire true brotherly action and effect industrial reforms, and ultimately the transformation of society.

But Christ left it with His followers to discover where and how they should apply this spirit. He laid down no hard-and-fast regulations ; but He stated in the most emphatic terms that they were inexcusable who disregarded this spirit.

V

The problem, therefore, for all Christians to solve is, how far they can actively engage in social work, use the economic and political agencies necessary for the doing of that work, and throw whatever influence they command on the side of social progress.

Great differences of opinion obtain with respect to this vital and urgent question; but as time passes and the claims of the poor cry for attention an increasing light is cast upon the question, and the duty of churchmen is becoming more and more plain.

Writing on the Social Movement twenty years ago, Professor Sanday said that "Christianity strictly interpreted knows nothing of rights and grievances; it knows nothing even of just discontent."¹ But before he penned these words he wrote, "So far as slavery was only a social condition Christianity had nothing to say to it. It was the incidental evils of slavery which were so un-Christian; and these evils this Christian principle was bound sooner or later to grapple with and to abolish."² But can any social condition be separated from its

¹ *Two Present-Day Questions: I. Biblical Criticism; II. The Social Movement*, p. 66.

² *Ibid.* p. 64.

consequences? If these be evil and should be abolished, the condition itself must also be attacked and destroyed. With all deference one must say that Professor Sanday's argument will not hold. To-day it is the evil consequences of social conditions which men rightly assail; and the sweeping away of them will also carry with it the conditions themselves. Other and better conditions will take their place.

But it is difficult to induce Christian men to undertake this necessary task. There are still those who claim for the spiritual life isolation from economic and political issues, as if these were not also the outcome of the operations of spiritual and ethical principles. Dean Inge quite recently writes in his Preface to *The Church and the Age*, that "Christianity is essentially a struggle for an independent life. It can mould society from above, as it were, but it can never entangle itself with any human institutions without disastrous results to itself and them." There is just enough truth in this deliverance to lull into indifference those who accept it. Spiritual individualism is by no means the whole truth.

Professor Sanday counselled the clergy to adopt an attitude of reserve in relation to all social questions. But a tentative position does

not meet the evils of present-day social life. One is not therefore surprised to see a body of clergymen boldly entering into the social arena, or to hear them affirming, "we have changed that standpoint."¹

And, still more significantly, Bishop Gore made in February 1912 a statement which scatters to the winds a mere attitude of reserve. "I have constantly," he said, "sat down bewildered before the blank and, as it seems to me, simply stupid refusal of the mass of Church people to recognise their social duties. Why on earth is it? What produces this strange blindness of heart and mind? Often have I tortured my mind to find an answer to these questions and tortured it in vain." "Look," he said, "at our Lord's awful and tremendous words about wealth—words which none of us who are rich in incomes to-day can hear without trembling through and through. The 'poor,' whom He called 'blessed,' were they like the poor of our slums? Not a bit of it; they were like the Apostles, of the well-to-do artisan class. Remember what He said about the rich and the poor, and then remember the state of our society to-day. I dare," added the Bishop, "any one of you to say that what He preached

¹ *The Church and New Century Problems*, edited by W. J. Hocking, p. 9.

was not 'revolutionary' doctrine, which we have got over again to digest and make our own."

Speaking about the same time, the Bishop of Manchester dealt with the assumed danger of the Church entangling herself with social questions. "It was," said Dr. Ryle, "very generally believed that if we could make each separate person better, educate him better, start him better furnished with good principles, then, in a comparatively short time, we should have done all that is necessary for the betterment of society. But," he added significantly, "some men believe that the regeneration of society is vastly more important than the regeneration of individuals. Better laws, better homes, better distribution of property, are the methods by which it is hoped that we shall make better men." The Bishop denounced the separation and partitioning of the spiritual from the practical as "spiritual death."

These distinct utterances of high ecclesiastics are not without a much-needed warning. Their very passionateness may perhaps shift the balance of emphasis from the individual on to society. Care must, however, be taken to give the individual his rightful place. The regeneration of society cannot be placed over that of the individual and pronounced to be more urgent or better. Both are necessary; and the

individual comes first, but always with a view to the regeneration and transformation of society.

But when this distinction is made and due attention paid to it, the warning sounds clear and distinct. The Church of Christ is the custodier of the highest ethics. It is her duty to apply her ethics to the individual and to society. Legislation, business, and all social institutions can and should be Christianised; for, this is only to say that Christian ethics can be applied to them, and that if social progress is to be assured Christian ethics *must* be applied.

In view of all that has been written in these pages it is easy to perceive whence comes this "*must*." For all social reforms, when fully investigated, are seen to contain ethical principles. Mere physical force effects nothing abidingly or beneficially. Ethics lies behind and inspires all social betterment. It is matter of history that Christian ethics has been the most powerful influence in social life. But it has not lost its potency; and it avails to-day as in the past. This inspiring and elevating power waits to be applied. Who are to use it, if not Christians? It is theirs, and *must* be applied by them.

Society too has its claims. It also waits for the application of Christian ethics to the social evils which burden it. There is neither hope

nor outlook for society if Christian ethics be withheld. This gives intensity to the "must."

But more important still, the realisation of the kingdom of God necessitates the ever-increasing application of the great spiritual and moral truths of the Faith to practical life. Christians profess to pray and long for the coming of that kingdom. The call, therefore, to penetrate into the heart and essence of Christian ethics and to obey its gracious imperatives in the interests of social progress is loud, clear, and urgent.

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